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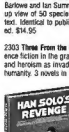

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Illustration by Clyde Caldwell

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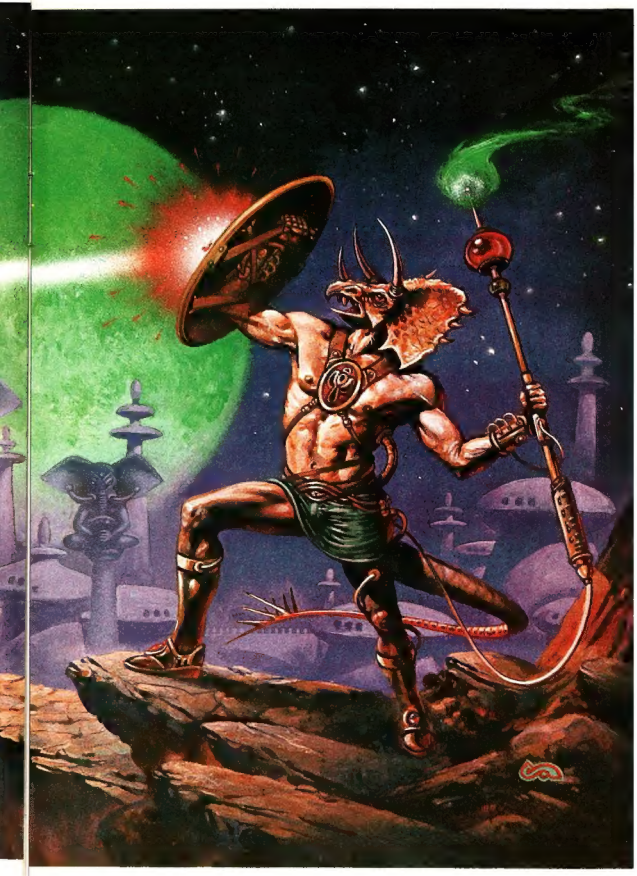

...THIRD ANNIVERSARY...

Three years—has it been that long?

In this part of the universe—where a few days can be an eternity, and a month can fly by in the blink of an eye—it's impossible to be sure.

In our sixth issue (September 1977) we published a story called "Major Fatal" by Moebius, little realizing what we were letting ourselves in for with those thirteen innocent, beautiful, bizarre pages. In "Major Fatal" Moebius gave us an entire world, one that he proceeded to explore for another ninety-eight pages in the serialization of "The Airtight Garage." (It was originally "The Airtight Garage of Jerry Cornelius." Jerry Cornelius is a creation of Michael Moorcock's, and Moorcock once announced that he was giving Jerry to "the universe" for anyone who wished to make use of him. But, perhaps after seeing the concluding installment in the French version, Moorcock rescinded his bequest and we've deleted Jerry's last name from recent chapters.)

This issue, "Garage" concludes its epic run at last.

Scholars among our readers will note that the Bakalite—or onesuch—made his initial appearance in "Major Fatal" and did not return until "The Airtight Garage"'s penultimate installment, last issue. Those same scholars may have noticed a certain untidiness in other aspects of "Garage," however: Larc Dalxtre never did find Normandy, and what are we to make of the fact that Engineer Barnabus turned out to be a woman? What became of her and the Archer? Good questions. Perhaps Moebius will answer them some day.

In the meantime, we have an anniversary to celebrate!

And what could be more fitting than the premiere episode of "Champakou"?

Just to be *able* to publish "Champakou" is an achievement worthy of celebration. Have I told you about the *trouble* we've had?

When I joined the *HM* staff, the December 1979 issue was in preparation, and Sean and Julie had already decided that the first thirty-

Ted White

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: Published monthly by HM Communications, Inc., 635 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022 $24.00 paid annual subscription. $32.00 paid two year subscription and $39.00 paid three year subscription in territorial US. Additional $3.00 for Canada and $5.00 elsewhere. Second class postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices.

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odd pages of "Champakou" would make a fitting Christmas present for all you metallic readers. When I saw those pages I couldn't help agreeing. What fantastic art! What a lyrical story! This guy Jeronaton was brilliant!

But, when we publish a full-color story that first appeared in *Metal Hurlant*, we don't just tear the pages out of that magazine and send them to our printer—that would mean a definite loss of color, detail, and overall quality. Instead, we order the original process-separation films from the French, translate and substitute English for French in the captions and balloons, and send all that to our printer.

Funny thing: the film wasn't available just then, the French told us; something to do with the book version then being printed in Spain. We sighed, remade the issue, and said, "Oh well; next month..."

As it turned out, our next issue—my first—became for other reasons an "all-American" issue, but we definitely planned on "Champakou" for February. Strangely enough, the film wasn't available then either. But we received promises that we'd have it for March, for sure. After we tore out a lot of hair and revamped the lineup, we planned on the story for March.

Well, you've already seen the March issue, so you're ahead of me now. *Metal Hurlant*'s editor-publisher, Jean-Pierre Dionnet, paid us a visit in early December, and when he showed up without "Champakou," we fell upon him with loud cries and beat him senseless. We then bound him and left him in a closet, with nothing but water and raisins, for three days. This appeared to have a salutary effect on him, and we were assured that we'd have "Champakou" very soon.

Imagine our surprise and delight when the US Customs Office informed us that "Champakou" had been seized as pornography.

All that remained was for the Iranians to take the story hostage once customs released it. That, at least, did not happen.

Well, they say that one appreciates most those things which are hardest won. We appreciate the hell out of "Champakou." Hope you do, too.

The mail is just starting to come in on our "new look" for the eighties, and, as you can see with a glance at this issue's Chain Mail, the response is considerably less than 100 percent enthusiastic. Some of you seem to feel that the very idea of running columns is an abysmally stupid one. Others of you approve of some of the columns but not of others. Well, you can please some people some of the time, and you can please some people some of the time, but, as my Uncle Abe used to say, you can't please some people some of the time.

It should be obvious by now that our columnists are not recycling stuff you could read somewhere else—*any* somewhere else. If you don't think the Comix column belongs here, just what do you think the roots of this magazine are, fergodsake? If you think the Muzick column is just a cop from *Rolling Stone*, when's the last time you read that mag? Ten years ago? Bhob's Flix is *not* a movie review column, and if that's what you think it is, about all you've proved to me is that you didn't even read it. As for the SF column—okay, you got me there: it's true that other magazines *do* review and discuss science fiction. But, as about half of you insist (for other reasons) on pointing out, ***HM*** is an SF/fantasy magazine. Where better to talk about the stuff? (You haven't had time yet to complain about Maurice Horn's quarterly international comics column, since it makes its debut this issue, but I'm sure some of you will, you chauvinistic bastards. Wake up! ***HM*** is an international magazine. We draw upon artists from all over the world, and it stands to reason that we'll tell you something about what's happening in other parts of the world. The French didn't create *Metal Hurlant* out of thin air, you know.)

The big complaint is that our columns are depriving you of additional pages of superlative comic art. (Of course, if we dropped the columns and filled those pages with superlative comic art, some of you would complain that it was vacuous, banal, and otherwise not to your taste. Like my Uncle Abe says...) Well, this is largely untrue. What we did give the old heave-ho to was the fiction, the naked prose, you remember, those stories you used to complain about. And if you look closely, you'll observe that we've cleverly interleaved our columns with additional comics in fresh, new formats.

The idea is to make ***HM*** a bit more of a *magazine*—and to give you a little more reading matter for your two bucks. This way you can't read an entire issue in a few moments at the newsstand. (Or is that the real core of those complaints?) We're still fine tuning the mechanism—expect further doses of the unexpected. We do.

—Ted White

CHAIN MAIL

Dear Editor:

Heavy Metal isn't supposed to print anything else other than science fiction and fantasy. While I admit I do like to read "Lt. Blueberry," I wouldn't recommend that you publish a "Blueberry" adventure in a science fiction and fantasy magazine. The only alternative is to establish another magazine, full of adventure and humor, so you could publish "Blueberry" in that magazine.

I wouldnt' want to read a music or UG comix column in ***HM***. I wouldn't want to read anything not relevant to the theme of the magazine. Please print only fantasy and SF comix—no westerns, no UG comix, no adventure, and nothing else but fantasy and SF.

Mark Miles
(address withheld)

Gee, Mark, where is it written that HM *"isn't supposed to print anything else other than science fiction and fantasy"? Will they take away our license to publish if we slip in eight pages of one of Moebius's westerns? Will you desert us now that we're publishing columns? But you've got a point there—we are considering doing just what you suggest, starting up a magazine devoted to adventure comix. If we do, can we count on your support? —TW*

Dear Ted:

Just thought I'd put in my two cents worth about all the words you've added to ***HM***. The initial effect is that it takes about twice as long to go through a copy, which allows the experience more time to seep into the pores.

As far as Lou Stathis's Muzick column goes, I was sold as soon as he mentioned real musicians like Robert Wyatt, Kevin Ayers, Gong, and that whole school of musical thought. Please! More of same!

Comix is a fine subject to cover. I have no complaints at all, since comix, muzick, sex, and mind expansion are major matters of intense interest and devotion for me, and most other ***HM*** readers, I'm sure.

In fact, rather than OD on more words, let me just say that I like the subjects and writers, so I vote you keep them.

My wife, on the other hand, doesn't like them. She's more into visuals. I like to read, so I like both. Ho hum.

Stephen Gainer
Elk, Ca.

Mr. White:

Weekly and monthly, tons of magazines appear on newsstands, and continuous waves of large-format books deluge bookstores, which more substantially explore and report upon those areas covered by ***HM***'s new columns. With only the January issue as evidence, these columns, for the most part, evince superficiality and the rehashing of information available in many other sources.

Please, excise (posthaste) these superfluous exercises in banality, and return ***HM*** to full-fledged coverage of what may be termed the New Fantastic Art, for *this is the purpose for its existence*. No amount of rhapsodizing, in regard to EC, the "swinging sixties," the "golden age of comics," Erio, King, Crumb, et al., *ad nauseam*, has more than an insignificant impact upon most readers. Over bloated praise for new media products—such as, "***The Shining***...may be...the greatest horror film of the century" (why not the next 100 years, also?)—will not perceptibly increase lines at theaters. The artwork is what is important, and to which ***HM*** should be dedicated, without being diluted by useless twitterings that weaken its focus and impact.

Why waste space with lazy drool from Stathis, when so much excellent art is available? Why not present a portfolio of Giger's latest paintings, or institute a one- or two-page feature with reproductions of fantastic art of the past, or initiate an EC-style feature (since the majority of your writers seem so rapturously hung-up on that topic), or grace ***HM*** with an occasional poster? The possibilities are infinite, and yet a magazine which had evolved into a fairly well-tuned instrument of monthly excitement is now saddled with columns illustrative of quantity rather than quality.

It now seems true that anything good never lasts long.

It's probably cheaper to have print (rather than art) reproduced, but even for the forthcoming $2.00 price, I'd rather see fewer pages in ***HM*** than space wasted as described above.

Finally, I know my opinion will be ignored; the

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SIDEBAR:

Illustration by Chris Browne

Trekking Down the Black Hole

by Norman Spinrad

I mention to a fan who has seen both films that I've seen *Star Trek* and I'm going to see *The Black Hole*.

"Oy," sez he, "*The Black Hole* is worse than *Star Trek*."

"Impossible," sez I. "*Nothing* can be worse than *Star Trek*."

Wrong.

You've got to hand it to the wizards at Disney. *Star Trek*, the giant $40 million special effects extravaganza, looked like an old TV two-parter slapped together in a couple of weeks for under a million. But *The Black Hole* managed to achieve much the same effect for about half the budget, and it has the cutest robots yet. The difference was about $16 million in blown special effects that Paramount had to eat on *Star Trek*; Disney achieved mediocrity much more efficiently. The result is that *The Black Hole* is sure to make back its investment, whereas the color of the ink on *Star Trek*'s bottom line is still problematical.

If both films had been made for a third of their eventual budgets, they would have been better movies artistically as well as financially. For both films were assassinated at birth by the same asshole thinking: a misconception of what both science fiction and cinema are all about. This threatens to inundate us with more of the same until one of these golden turkeys lays a box office bomb the stench of which will kill science fiction movies as the mainline fad.

The reason *Star Trek* and *The Black Hole* turned out to be turkeys, despite the mighty resources of two major studios and two special effects armies with enough hardware to fight World War III, may be gleaned from an educated reading of the credits. Or more precisely, what is missing from the credits. When you see more than one writing credit on a film, you have cause for trepidation already, but when you see *three*, you know damn well that this is no true collaboration; this is a script where there was trouble. And the fact is that both *Star Trek* and *The Black Hole* had whole platoons of writers marching

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SF

Steve Brown

The current SF boom is a flashcube, all light and fury, with no sound or power. The varied richness of the field still eludes a large number of people who would, no doubt, love it if they tried it. But they have a formidable barrier to cross first: the movies.

SF has always been an integral part of the modern literature of Britain, partially due to the rightful acceptance of H.G. Wells (the *true* father of SF) as a serious, and gifted, novelist. In France, one of the quirkiest, and most inherently unfilmable American SF writers —Philip K. Dick—outsells all other SF writers two to one. The French (stereotypically hard-to-please intellectuals) possess a reading taste that moves without prejudice across the entire SF spectrum. There, SF is accepted as the freest of all modes of literature; and ultimately it is the writer, and the book, that are judged, not the genre.

But America, true to form, is a paradox. This is the only major SF reading (and writing) country where the popular conception of the literature is so tightly bound to the image presented by the movies. While American writers have long dominated the field, carrying it to dizzying conceptual heights, defining the genre while systematically smashing one parameter after another, the larger American reading public has refused, on the average, to consider the possibility of SF as literature. I am reminded of a *New York Times* reviewer who, while stating that Theodore Sturgeon was one of the finest short story writers in the country, lamented the fact that he wasted his talent on so frivolous a genre.

Too many Americans stubbornly resist

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COMIX INT'L

Illustration by Guido Crepax

Maurice Horn

In art," Montaigne once exclaimed, "all light comes from Italy." Of course he was writing in the course of the sixteenth century, when Italian painters, sculptors, and architects were providing the cutting edge for the European Renaissance. But all through the centuries, the Italians have been noted for their contributions to all the arts, including the two visual art forms most representative of the twentieth century, the movies and the comics.

Italian comics have had a distinguished history, in terms of both creativity and acceptance. They have flourished ever since the first decade of the century, with the contributions of such pioneering cartoonists as Attilio Mussino, Antonio Rubino, and Sergio Tofano ("Sto"). In the thirties, at a time when American comic strips overwhelmingly dominated the newly created field of adventure comics, the Italians were among the few foreign cartoonists able to hold their own, with such outstanding creations as Rino Albertarelli's *Kit Carson*, Walter Molino's *Virus*, Giovanni Scolari's *Saturno contro la Terra* and Cesare Avai's

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MUZICK

Lou Stathis

I have been surprised a frightening number of times over the past three years by the sorts of muzick that have emerged from the New Wave. Most of these jolts to the frontal lobes have been mercifully pleasant ones. I can still remember back to the fall of 1976 when I brought home a copy of "Anarchy in the UK" to hear for myself what all the brouhaha in the British press was about. It was the first single I had bought in years, and from the instant I was kicked across the room by the opening soundblast and impaled on a doorknob, I knew something Olympian was in the offing. Something *nasty*.

Three years being an exceedingly long time in today's media/cultural pressure cook-

continued on page 80

FLIX

Illustration by Nino Carbe

Bhob

In the midst of the chaos in Spielberg's *1941*, there's a wonderful, nostalgic interlude recreating the experience of being in a theater showing the first run of Walt Disney's *Dumbo*, six days after the Pearl Harbor attack. Why, one wonders, didn't Buena Vista rerelease this Disney feature simultaneously with Spielberg's "comedy spectacle" so patrons at multiplex theaters, after seeing *1941*, could walk across the lobby to buy a ticket for *Dumbo*?

Spielberg calls *1941* "bent history," and so it is: *Dumbo* didn't open at LA's Carthay Circle until December 19 (minus premiere searchlights, after police told Disney and RKO execs that any street crowds would be "a national hazard"). "The Great Los Angeles Air Raid," staged in *1941*, actually took place during February 1942, just after *Dumbo* had closed at the Carthay.

With moments reminiscent of Laurel and Hardy's *Air Raid Wardens*, *1941* caricatures the West Coast's concern over air raids, blackouts, and bombs. Disney had a different kind of bomb on his hands—*Fantasia* (1940), which, with a standard soundtrack, failed to attract a mass audience on the heels of its successful yearlong New York run in Fantasound (seven-track stereo with thirty speakers). On that same February of "The Great LA Air Raid," Disney flew to San Francisco to oversee the construction of a projection booth for an opening of *Fantasia* at a legitimate theater, the Geary. "Look," he told his cohorts, "there are going to be a lot of bankers here tonight. If they ask how the picture is doing, tell them it's doing great!"

In time, *Fantasia* (with its original stereo restored) found its audience, made back its $2.2 million negative cost, and now does boffo business. Despite some passages of undeniable kitsch, it's regarded today almost as a national historic landmark. How I got in contact with one of the *Fantasia* artists is a story in itself, a curious chain of events I'll share with you, along with all appropriate and necessary digressions.

It began a couple of years ago when I was in Washington, DC, hanging out at the cluttered studio of artist/photographer Allen Appel, while he was meeting a deadline on a collage-illustration for the *Washington Post*'s *Potomac* magazine. (To give you a fix on this: Some of Allen's work very much resembles the collages of Norman Rubington published during *Heavy Metal*'s first year. More recent Appel creations, unlike anything I've ever seen before, are remarkably sensitive, content-rich paintings on antique and junk mirrors in their original frames.) To keep me occupied while he worked at the drawing table, Allen handed me a large pile of paper, explaining, "When I left Montana, I had cartons of books I didn't want to carry with me, so I just tore out the pages I liked." Well, Allen's tearsheet sheaf was a treasure trove, everything from illustrations for thirties children's books, to an unusual page of anamorphic line drawings from a sixty-year-old edition of *The Book of Knowledge*: elongated and distorted scenes that instantly sent me hurtling back through the childhood corridors of memories surrounding my grandmother's parlor, and rainy days when I would open her glass-enclosed bookcase, pull out the *Book of Knowledge* volume with that same page, and sprawl on the carpet in anamorphic rapture.

The next group of pictures in Allen's file

held me just as entranced, even though they had no personal meaning. These were five *Tales from the Arabian Nights* illustrations, seemingly dated 1930, but apparently torn from a fifties paperback (possibly an Avon reprint, I thought). The tiny, handwritten date read 1930, or maybe 1950. I wasn't sure. Meticulously inked and ablaze with eroticism, these drawings appeared to be the product of a fantasist, unknown to me, working in the post-Beardsley tradition of Harry Clarke, the majestically demoniac Irish illustrator of Poe, Perrault, and Goethe. He was, I felt, Clarke's equal—an artist who was picking up where Clarke had put down his pen. (In 1931, Clarke died of tuberculosis in Switzerland.) I squinted at the signature; it looked like either "Carre," or "Carde," or maybe neither.

Allen gave me the tearsheets. I filed them away and forgot about them—almost. Months later, while researching in a totally different area, I was scanning a list of Disney studio artists in the back of Bob Thomas's 1958 *Walt Disney—The Art of Animation*. My eye hesitated momentarily as it went past the name Nino Carbe, credited as one of the background artists on *Victory Through Air Power* (1943), and on the "Nutcracker Suite" and "Toccata and Fugue in D Minor" sequences of *Fantasia*. I pulled the *Arabian Nights* pages out of my files and looked again at the signature. The same. I had identified the artist, but, far from solving any mystery, I now had more questions than ever. A look through a whole shelf of books on animation resulted in no further information and neither did an inquiry to the Walt Disney archives. Only this lone comment in Radu Florescu's 1975 *In Search of Frankenstein*: "In 1932 there appeared an interesting edition of the novel by Illustrated Editions Co., fascinating because of the illustrations by Nino Carbe, probably the first illustrated *Frankenstein* since the 1831 edition."

In April 1978, I interviewed animation director Takashi while writing an article for *Fantastic Films* on the ill-fated, $6 million feature-length animated fantasy ***Metamorphoses*** (since retitled ***Winds of Change***), and the producing company, Sanrio, supplied me with a huge, glossy-slick press sheet. In an effort to make a film in the classic Disney tradition—a "rock *Fantasia*"—Sanrio hired at least nine artists who had held key positions on Disney features of the early forties, and there, in the *Metamorphoses* press sheet, was the name Nino Carbe, co-credited for "layout." So, through Takashi, I was finally able to reach Carbe, learning that he had just completed the "animation effects" for Ralph Bakshi's *Lord of the Rings*. But when I mentioned the marvelous *Arabian Nights* art that had launched me on this quest, the enigma began anew. Even though I was now 99 percent certain that Carbe had done this work in 1930, he had no memory of *ever* illustrating *Arabian Nights*. And, as it turned out, even he was startled by the outcome of this mystery.

As he modestly recounted to me, his life-long involvement in the art field—animation, fiction and textbook illustration, advertising art, and fine art—spanned nearly six decades. The infant Nino arrived in the United States three years after his birth in Sicily on March 12, 1909. As he entered his teens, he began studying the violin, an instrument he was devoted to for the next five and a half years. At age sixteen, he enrolled in Cooper Union to study art and soon became an assistant to Willy Pogany (1882-1955), the famed Hungarian-born illustrator, muralist, and theatrical costume/set designer. Pogany also worked in films. As Carbe recalls, "He came out to California in the thirties, and the first thing I think he worked on was some kind of a fantasy with Gilda Gray in it; he had painted a matte of a castle in the distance. When I was through working for Willy Pogany, I was seventeen at the time, in 1926." His experience with Pogany led to employment as a paint boy on the theatrical scenery created at the Law Studios and the Shubert Scenic studio. After doing batik for a New York firm when he was eighteen ("Batik in the thirties was pretty exciting"), he spent the next five years in film advertising at the New York art department of Columbia Pictures. "I learned how to retouch, working on pressbooks that go out to exhibitors throughout the country."

In 1935, "after weathering the Depression," he moved to California. "I knocked around for three years. Not being a cartoonist, I never thought of going to the Disney studio, but in 1938 I went there. I had met a copywriter for Columbia Pictures when I was working there, and he said, 'Nino, the Disney studio is the place to be. It's going somewhere. So, I finally got in on the strength of my airbrush ability. Then I made some drawings, and the gals in the airbrush department liked them; they said, 'Why don't you make a drawing for *Fantasia*? They need a castle.' So I did a castle, a background in 'The Nutcracker Suite.' Snowflakes come out of the windows; they weave towards you, and, as it comes to the foreground, one turns into a ballerina. I put an acetate over it and added a misty, moisty effect. It was immediately taken over by one of the girls to Sylvia Holland's department [Sylvia Moberly-Holland handled story development on "The Nutcracker Suite" and on Disney's *Make Mine Music* (1946).] One day, one of the directors came in; I was doing some airbrush work for him on 'Ave Maria.' He said, 'Did you do that drawing in Sylvia Holland's room?' I said, 'Yes, I did.' He just shook his head, and he left. One of the girls came over and said, 'I guess we've lost you.' I said, 'What do you mean?' 'Well, you're going to get transferred.' So, sure enough, two days later, I was transferred to the story department. At that time, there were like story sketches in color; they were not storyboards. They were doing what you'd call atmospheric drawings; some of them were in sequence. I had done some of Cleo—that was for *Pinocchio* [1940]. Of course, they were working on *Pinocchio* about the same time . . . undersea stuff. I was doing some little watercolors. I was there a short time, and after that I did some layouts. Then, from layout, I went into background."

Pinocchio is Disney's greatest achievement. A dark narrative of fantastical terror, influenced by nineteenth century book illustrations (as opposed to the flat, stylized, contemporary greeting card look of the 1959 *Sleeping Beauty*), it was made when the Disney studio was at the peak of its technical and artistic powers. However, Carbe's contributions to *Pinocchio*, and other early Disney features, have almost been lost to film history because some of his work was uncredited. "On *Fantasia*, I did an awful lot of painting and airbrushing for 'The Rite of Spring,' where those nebulous clouds sort of fuse and come together. Just effects . . .

Carbe's illustration for Hans Christian Andersen's

© 1980 by

multiplane camera stuff. A little of this, a little of that. There were some lightning flashes and things in *Bambi* [1942] that I worked on; it's kind of hard to pinpoint some of that. I did some of the background paintings for "The Nutcracker Suite," on the Sugar Plum Fairies." After he became friends with Norman Wright (story developer on "Nutcracker Suite" and sequence director on *Bambi*), the two teamed for a 1944 Golden Book, *Chip Chip*, with Carbe illustrating Wright's story.

In September 1946, Carbe left the Disney organization, returning to New York in 1947 to begin an eighteen-year stretch of freelancing. "I did designs for shower curtains and plastics; then we moved to Ridgefield, Connecticut, and from there I commuted to New York to freelance." During this period he illustrated a line of school textbooks for Boston's D.C. Heath Company, in which "one segment was a trip to the moon based on Werner Von Braun and Willy Ley's text." A staff job painting Christmas cards for Chryson Ltd. sent him back to the West Coast in 1964—just in time for the filming of Disney's *Jungle Book* (1967). "I was there six months. I did things like a fast pan, nothing to brag about—one of these defused fast pans where Baloo the Bear is running back and forth when one character gets hooked onto a branch and is just hanging there. I also did various other backgrounds under the supervision of Al Dempster, who was in charge at the time." Dempster was also a background artist on *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, *Saludos Amigos* (1943), *Victory Through Air Power*, *The Three Caballeros* (1945), *Make Mine Music*, *Song of the South* (1946), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), *Sleeping Beauty*, *101 Dalmatians* (1961), and *The Sword in the Stone* (1963)

As Carbe tells it, returning to animation after such a long absence was not easy. "I had had a very good position, a top priority position in 1946. I was just one of the cogs when I was working on *Jungle Book*. You come back years later, it doesn't mean anything anymore. It's not the same studio. Nothing is the same. Then, of course, they let me go—because Walt had died and everything was in an uproar—and so I had to tramp the streets like everybody else and compete with the rest of them. Half the people I didn't know because they were all new people, young people, in the business, and the business wasn't the same."

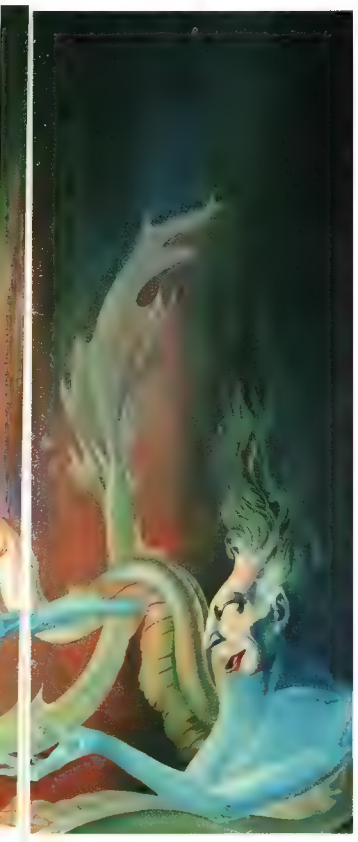
A few months later, Carbe found himself employed by Woody Woodpecker creator Walter Lantz. "I worked for him for four and a half years as a layout and background painter. It was just a one-man department. Then he retired, and I was out again." Next came periods of work with Hanna-Barbera and Filmation. "I wasn't happy with any of them . . . until Sanrio came along, and then that was real nice. *Metamorphoses* could have been a fantastic production, but it didn't turn out that way."

It now looks like we'll never get to see *Metamorphoses* as originally filmed by Takashi—five mythological episodes, minus dialogue, adapted from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with an accompanying rock score featuring the Rolling Stones, Joan Baez, and the Pointer Sisters. After initial previews in 1977, the film was released in May 1978. From all reports, both children and adults liked *Metamorphoses*, several critics compared it favorably to Disney, and it did well at the box office during its first week. As soon as ticket sales slackened, however, it was recalled for a complete overhaul: Walt de Faria (producer of the delightful 1977 animated feature ***The Mouse and His Child***) was put in charge, with another $400,000 worth of postproduction tinkering added to the original $6 million. The new title, *Winds of Change*, is an ironic choice, for the film was cut from eighty-nine minutes to eighty-two, with a substantial restructuring of the creation prologue. Famed radio scripter Norman Corwin was hired to write a narration, delivered in voice-over by Peter Ustinov (an inane decision in light of the fact that today's audiences sometimes hiss and laugh at *Fantasia*'s flatulent and condescending narrative introductions by musicologist and "explainer" Deems Taylor). Another addition was a *Star Wars*-type opening crawl, with starship sound effects. And, finally, the rock score was thrown out of the sound studio window to be replaced with—I don't know if you can believe this—a disco score by Alec R. Costandinos. It all seemed calculated to make audiences stand in their seats and chant in unison, "Disco sucks and so does *Winds of Change*! Rock 'n' Roll will never die! Bring back *Metamorphoses*!"

After working on Pegasus the Flying Horse and other scenes for the Takashi film, Carbe joined Bakshi's *Lord of the Rings* crew. "I'd been trying to get in with Bakshi for any number of times. He's a very difficult guy to get work with. Then, when I worked the first two days—God! he was so solid, and so complimentary, and I had been so nasty about him that I felt guilty."

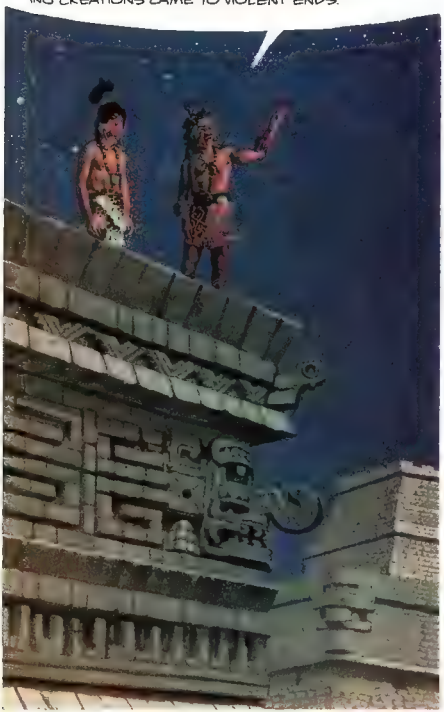
Between films, Carbe paints on a variety of fantastic and mythological themes. Recent paintings include *Death Rides a Skeletal Horse*, in oils, and *Jason and the Golden Fleece* and *Perseus and Medusa* (also the subject of a *Metamorphoses* episode) in acrylics. "I would like to devote all my time to painting," he stated last year. Quite a career. Obviously, Nino Carbe, at age seventy-one, is still going strong.

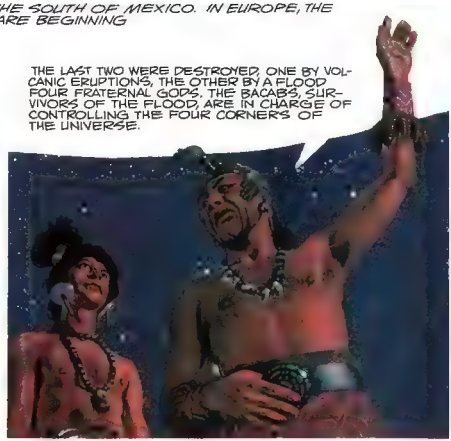
And the explanation for those fifty-year-old *Arabian Nights* drawings, you ask? An artist forgetting his own work is not uncommon, and what happened in this case is simply that, with the passing of years, no one had ever informed Carbe that these illustrations had been published—possibly to avoid payment, possibly because the originals were sold off as part of a lot to another publisher. In 1979, when I finally got around to mailing him copies, he saw his own pictures for the first time in decades and wrote back, "I knew that I illustrated another book prior to *Cyrano* and *Frankenstein*, for the very generous publisher of Illustrated Editions. I just forgot the subject matter. The illustrations were done in 1930 and were never published, to my knowledge, but were framed and hung in the publisher's home. An older artist friend of mine put me on to this company and told me that I could probably do a book for them for $100. I did get the book to do—for $50. They told me they were doing me a favor because of the publicity I would get from its publication. It was published later, from what you tell me, but I know nothing about it." Yet another example, among many, of the shabby treatment various publishers and producers have afforded some of America's greatest popular artists.



"The Little Mermaid," painted in oils in 1944.
Nino Carbe

THIS STORY BEGINS A LONG TIME AGO, SOMEWHERE TO THE SOUTH OF MEXICO. IN EUROPE, THE ROMAN EMPIRE HAS FALLEN AND THE MIDDLE AGES ARE BEGINNING


THE HEAVENS ARE DIVIDED INTO THIRTEEN LAYERS, SUPERIMPOSED ONE ON TOP OF ANOTHER. EACH IS INHABITED BY CERTAIN GODS. WE ARE, AT THIS MOMENT, IN THE FIFTH WORLD. THE FOUR PRECEDING CREATIONS CAME TO VIOLENT ENDS.


THE LAST TWO WERE DESTROYED, ONE BY VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS, THE OTHER BY A FLOOD. FOUR FRATERNAL GODS, THE BACABS, SURVIVORS OF THE FLOOD, ARE IN CHARGE OF CONTROLLING THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE UNIVERSE.

BUT YOU, CHAMPAKOU, YOU WILL SUCCEED ME. YOU WILL BE A PRECIOUS TREASURE OF KNOWLEDGE, WHO WILL HAVE TO TEACH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF SAYATAL. I WANT YOU TO LEARN YET MORE...

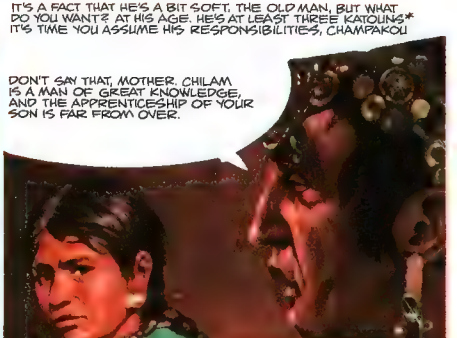
YOU SEE, CHAMPAKOU, THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU MUST TELL YOUR COMPATRIOTS, BUT OTHERS THAT YOU MUST KEEP TO YOURSELF. MEN ARE NOT READY TO COMPREHEND EVERYTHING, BUT YOU HAVE ARRIVED AT A POINT IN YOUR STUDIES WHERE I'D LIKE TO REVEAL CERTAIN SECRETS TO YOU.
IF IT'S NECESSARY, SIR, I WILL REMAIN SILENT.
IT WILL BE NECESSARY, MY FRIEND, BECAUSE IF YOU SPEAK TO ANYONE ABOUT THIS, KNOW THAT HUNAB-KU, THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS, WILL PUNISH YOU SEVERELY FOR TREASON.
WE ASTRONOMERS SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE NOT AS AN END IN ITSELF, BUT AS A WAY TO CONTROL DESTINY. IN THE UNIVERSE, THERE EXISTS AN ORDER TO WHICH GODS CONFORM. IF THIS ORDER IS KNOWN, WE MIGHT PREDICT THE FUTURE--KNOWING WHICH GODS INFLUENCE US, WE CAN THEN DECIDE WHEN AND TO WHAT DIVINITY WE NEED TO MAKE SACRIFICES
AND SO WE HAVE COME TO THIS: THE STARS THAT YOU SEE ARE NOT ALL GODS OR GODDESSES, AS I JUST SAID. IN REALITY, CERTAIN OF THESE LUMINOUS POINTS RESEMBLE THE GREAT DRAGON OF THE EARTH. WITH TREES, MEN, AND ANIMALS.

WHAT? THERE ARE OTHER WORLDS IN THE UNIVERSE? WHO TOLD YOU THIS?
I DIDN'T EXPECT YOUR DISBELIEF, KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT I SPEAK THE TRUTH. WHOEVER IT WAS WHO TOLD ME THIS COMES FROM OUT THERE.
IT'S DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE.
NOW YOU DON'T TRUST ME— WHAT IMPERTINENCE! DID I EVER TEACH YOU ANYTHING FALSE? DID I EVER LIE TO YOU? WHY SHOULD I PASS MY KNOWLEDGE ON TO YOU NOW IF YOU THINK I'M OLD AND SENILE?
EXCUSE ME, BUT THAT'S MUCH DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TEACHING ME UNTIL TODAY. BUT... TELL ME ABOUT THE BEING FROM ELSEWHERE, THE GOD YOU SPEAK OF.
NO! I CAN SEE THAT YOU'RE NOT YET READY. YOU'RE TOO YOUNG, AND I REGRET THAT I TOLD YOU THIS MUCH LATER, PERHAPS.. WHAT WERE WE TALKING ABOUT BEFORE THIS? OH, YES. THE FOUR BACABS WHO RULE THE WORLD.

WE WON AGAIN! BRAVO, CHAMPAKOU!

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL, THE DOLL OF JADE LOOK AT HER CURVES!

ME, I PREFER THE GIRL OF CAZUMEL. SHE'S BIGGER
IT SEEMS, THOUGH, THAT THE DOLL OF JADE WAS PROMISED TO CHECTUMAL, THE SON OF NACOM, CHIEF OF THE GOVERNOR'S GUARDS.
IN ANY CASE, SHE'S NOT FOR CHAMPAKOU, BECAUSE THE DIVINE ASTRONOMERS LIKE CHILAM ARE VOWED TO CELIBACY.
SPEAKING OF WHICH, TCAPOUNAQUE, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CHILAM?
THAT OLD MAN? YOU ASK ME? AREN'T YOU IN A BETTER POSITION TO KNOW HIM?
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE ONE OF HIS STUDENTS, DIDN'T YOU EVER HEAR HIM SAY BIZARRE THINGS? THIS IS BETWEEN YOU AND ME... DO YOU THINK HE'S NORMAL?
AH-HAH.. MYSTERIOUS WAYS. WHAT DO I THINK OF CHILAM? WELL.. BESIDES THE KNOWLEDGE HE'S REAPED BECAUSE OF HIS AGE, I THINK, FOR MY PART, THAT IT'S NATURAL HE'S A LITTLE WACKY.
ME? I THOUGHT HE WAS NORMAL UNTIL YESTERDAY. BUT, NOW...

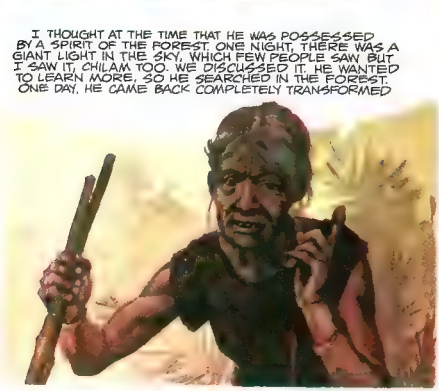

IT'S A FACT THAT HE'S A BIT SOFT, THE OLD MAN, BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT? AT HIS AGE. HE'S AT LEAST THREE KATOUNS* IT'S TIME YOU ASSUME HIS RESPONSIBILITIES, CHAMPAKOU
DON'T SAY THAT, MOTHER. CHILAM IS A MAN OF GREAT KNOWLEDGE, AND THE APPRENTICESHIP OF YOUR SON IS FAR FROM OVER.

*ONE KATOUN=A TWENTY-YEAR CYCLE.

I'VE BEEN RE-THINKING WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT AT DINNER, CHAMPAKOU. I'M TELLING YOU—IT'S TRUE THAT CHILAM HAS CHANGED. BUT THIS HAS BEEN HAPPENING FOR A WHILE.
AHH!

YES. HE WHO WAS SO ATTACHED TO TRADITIONS, SO PENSIVE. YOU COULD SAY THAT HE'S UNDER SHOCK. MORE THAN TWO KATOUNS AGO SOMETHING HAPPENED AND HE BECAME A DREAMER.

HE SEEMED PREOCCUPIED.
THAT'S IT. I KNEW HIM WELL, YOU KNOW. HE SEEMED TO BE WAITING FOR SOMETHING AND IT HAPPENED WHEN HE WAS THIRTY-FIVE TUNS.* I WAS TWENTY. OH! I KNEW HIM WELL, MUCH BETTER THAN YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER. WE UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER. WE SPOKE TOGETHER OFTEN.
ACCORDING TO YOU, THEN, WHAT HAPPENED?


I THOUGHT AT THE TIME THAT HE WAS POSSESSED BY A SPIRIT OF THE FOREST. ONE NIGHT, THERE WAS A GIANT LIGHT IN THE SKY, WHICH FEW PEOPLE SAW. BUT I SAW IT, CHILAM TOO. WE DISCUSSED IT. HE WANTED TO LEARN MORE, SO HE SEARCHED IN THE FOREST. ONE DAY, HE CAME BACK COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED

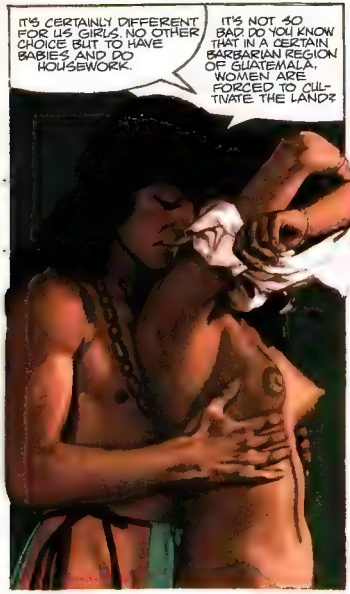
*1 TUN = 1 YEAR

A GOD OR A SPIRIT APPEARED TO HIM? THAT WOULD BE NORMAL. HE'S AN IMPORTANT MAN.
OH, LET'S NOT EXAGGERATE. HE'S NOT THE AHOUCAN, THE GREAT PRIEST OF TIKAL, THE METROPOLIS. SAYATAL IS ONLY A SMALL TOWN
ANYWAY, HE NEVER WANTED TO TALK TO ME ABOUT IT. DID HE EVER TALK TO YOU, CHAMP-AKOU?
?!
CHAMPAKOU! WHERE ARE YOU GOING? THE WORK IS NOT FINISHED!
EXCUSE ME, GRAND-MOTHER! I HAVEN'T BEEN AT IT FOR LONG.
OH, NO, GRAND-MOTHER. AT MOST, HE MENTIONED IT IN PASSING. UM, I HAVE TO GO. I'LL COME BACK.

OH, DOLL OF JADE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION.
I'M GOING TO PICK CORN IN MY FATHER'S FIELD NEAR THE STREAM.
DO YOU MIND IF I HELP YOU?
WHY NOT?
THEN I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU. I CAN CARRY SOMETHING FOR YOU. IF YOU'D LIKE HERE, GIVE ME YOUR BAG
YOU KNOW, I GO THERE A LOT BY MYSELF, SO I CAN REALLY MANAGE.
I'D LIKE TO BE IN YOUR PLACE AT TIMES. I'VE OFTEN THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FASCINATING TO STUDY THE SECRETS OF THE HEAVENS AND EARTH, TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE...
UMM, YES, CHILAM IS A GOOD TEACHER

AND YOU WILL REPLACE HIM SOON TO BECOME THE ASTRONOMER OF SAYATAL. IT'S FABULOUS... YOU WON'T GET MARRIED, RIGHT?
THAT'S HOW IT IS, IT'S THE LAW.
THE LAW IS CERTAINLY RIGID.
IT SEEMS THAT YOU'RE GOING TO SET UP HOUSE WITH CHEC-TUMAL, RIGHT?
*AHKINS=PRIESTS
IT'S WHAT MY FATHER WANTS FOR US. IT'S A PROMOTION. FOR NOW, I BELONG ONLY TO MYSELF. LISTEN! WE'RE GETTING NEAR THE STREAM.
YES, BUT NOT STRICT. I KNOW SOME AHKINS* WHO ARE MARRIED.
YOU'RE TIRED, AREN'T YOU? ADMIT IT!
WHO, ME? NO.

THEN I'M GOING TO WADE WITHOUT YOU.
DOLL OF JADE!
WHAT, CHAMPAKOU?
YOU KNOW... MY CAREER... I WANT TO TELL YOU THAT... MY FUTURE WORK IS TO BECOME A SOOTHSAYER-ASTRONOMER. IT WASN'T I WHO CHOSE IT.
CHILAM STUDIES THE POSITION OF THE STARS AT EVERY CHILD'S BIRTH, AND THEN HE COUNSELS THE PARENTS ACCORDING TO WHAT HE READS IN THE STARS.
IT SEEMED THAT I WAS MADE FOR THE JOB OF ASTRONOMER... IT'S FATE.


IT'S CERTAINLY DIFFERENT FOR US GIRLS. NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO HAVE BABIES AND DO HOUSEWORK.
IT'S NOT SO BAD DO YOU KNOW THAT IN A CERTAIN BARBARIAN REGION OF GUATEMALA, WOMEN ARE FORCED TO CULTIVATE THE LAND?

AND WE, CIVILIZED PEOPLE THAT WE ARE, KNOW THAT SOWING THE EARTH IS A JOB FOR MEN—LIKE SOWING WOMEN, I MIGHT ADD.

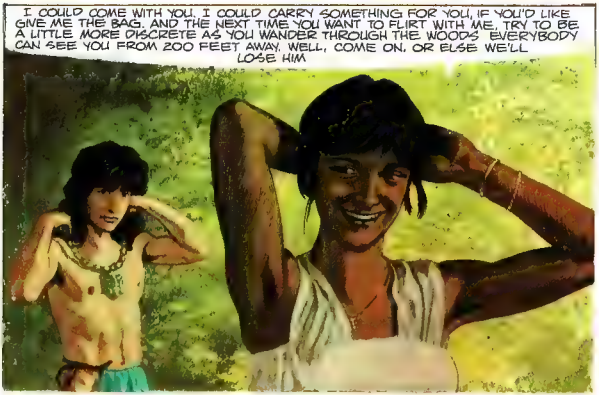
AAAAH!

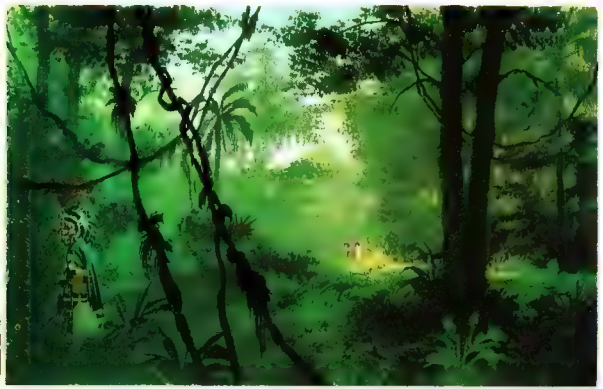
DOLL OF JADE! WATCH OUT! AN ALLIGATOR!
WHERE? CHAMPAKOLI! CHAMPAKOLI? WHERE ARE YOU?
AH! HELP ME!
AAAAAH! COUNT ALLIGATOR IS GOING TO EAT THE TENDER FLESH OF THE DOLL OF JADE!
CHAMPAKOLI! STOP! YOU SCARED ME!

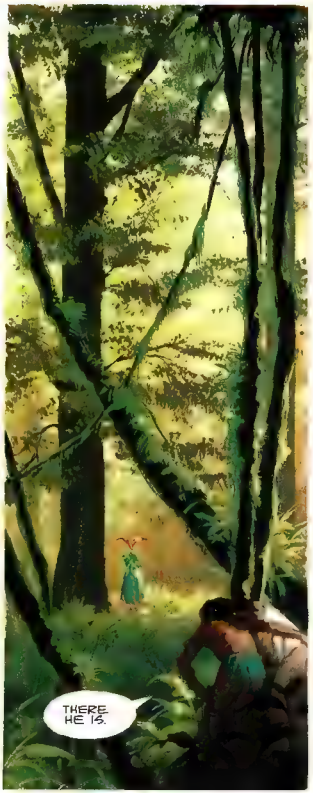
DOLL OF JADE! YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL! I LOVE YOU.
AAH!? SINCE WHEN?
?
FOR A LONG TIME. SINCE
SOMEONE'S WATCHING US!
NO. IT'S SOMEONE OR AN ANIMAL WHO'S PASSING BY ON THE PATH...
DO YOU THINK THEY SAW US?
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO SEE US TOGETHER. I'M PROMISED TO CHECTUMAL. DON'T FORGET
MY FATHER WOULD BEAT ME.
I'LL GO LOOK.
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. IT'S CHILAM. HE COULDN'T HAVE HEARD US. HE'S AS DEAF AS A PALM TREE.

AH!? AND WHAT'S HE DOING ALONE IN THE WOODS? YOU SHOULD KNOW~ AFTER ALL, YOU'RE HIS ASSISTANT.

THAT'S TRUE. HE'S CARRYING A HEAVY BASKET BUT WHAT COULD HE BE DOING WITH IT IN THE FOREST? WAIT FOR ME THIS INTRIGUES ME. I'M GOING TO FOLLOW HIM.

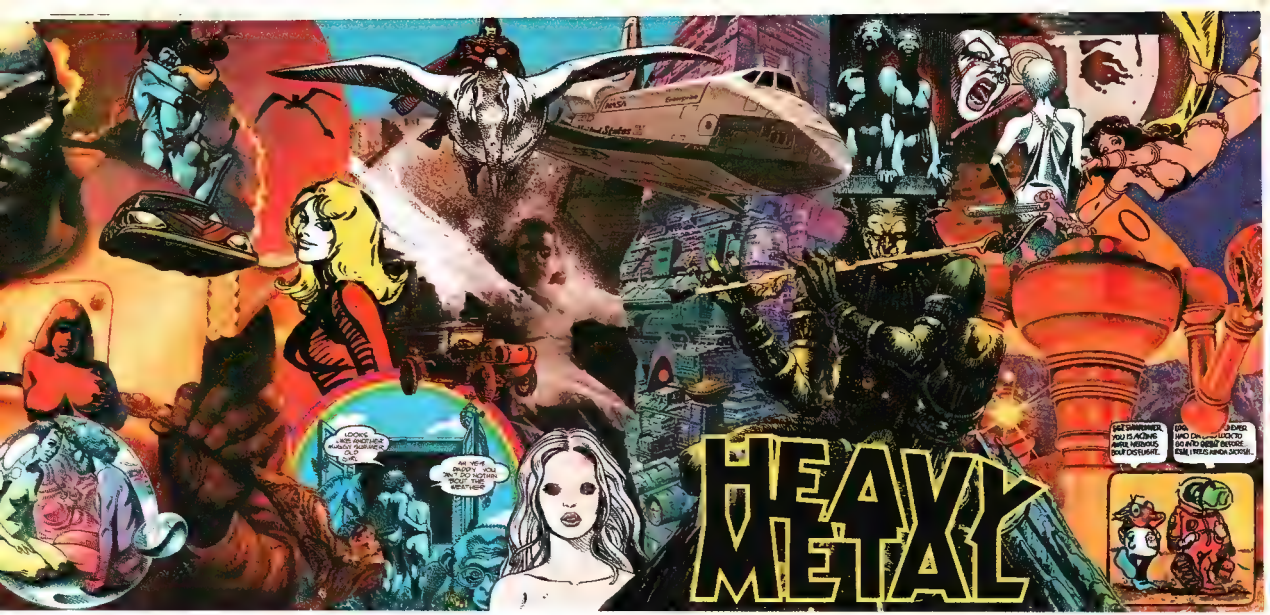

I COULD COME WITH YOU. I COULD CARRY SOMETHING FOR YOU, IF YOU'D LIKE GIVE ME THE BAG. AND THE NEXT TIME YOU WANT TO FLIRT WITH ME, TRY TO BE A LITTLE MORE DISCRETE AS YOU WANDER THROUGH THE WOODS EVERYBODY CAN SEE YOU FROM 200 FEET AWAY. WELL, COME ON. OR ELSE WE'LL LOSE HIM.




THERE HE IS.

THE SUN IS HIGH IN THE SKY. WE'VE WALKED FOR A LONG TIME. WHERE IS CHILAM LEADING US?
WE'RE APPROACHING THE ANCIENT MAYATLAN
THIS IS FANTASTIC! I'VE NEVER SEEN THESE RUINS. BUT WHAT IS THE OLD MAN DOING HERE?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 41...



COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

#1/APRIL, 1977: *The* Collector's Edition, with the debut of Moebius's "Arzach," Corben's "Den," Bodé's "Sunpot," and more. ($5.00)

#2/MAY, 1977: Russian astronauts, Roger the paranoid puppet, "Conquering Armies," the ultimate rock festival and more. ($4.00)

#3/JUNE, 1977: Macedo's "Rockblitz," the highly praised "Shells," the beginning of Davis's "World Apart," Moebius, Corben, Bodé, more. ($3.00)

#4/JULY, 1977: Lots of Moebius: "Azarch," plus part one of "The Long Tomorrow," also the final installment of "Sunpot." ($3.00)

#5/AUGUST, 1977: The saga of Polonius begins, "The Long Tomorrow" concludes, and "The World Apart" and "Den" continue. ($3.00)

#6/SEPTEMBER, 1977: Roger Zelazny has a short story, Moebius a space opera, plus more "World Apart," "Den," and "Polonius." ($3.00)

#7/OCTOBER, 1977: Fiction by Theodore Sturgeon, Moebius's "Airtight Garage," "Den" and "Polonius" *redux*, yet more. ($3.00)

#8/NOVEMBER, 1977: New Harlan Ellison fiction, nine color pages by Moebius and Rimbaud, conclusions for "Polonius" and "World Apart." ($3.00)

#9/DECEMBER, 1977: Extra pages for the complete "Vuzz" by Druillet, "Fortune's Fool" by Chaykin and Wein, plus full-color contributions form Corben, Macedo, Claveloux, and Moebius. ($3.00)

#10/JANUARY, 1978: Morrow illustrates Zelazny, Lob and Pichard update *Ulysses*, "Conquering Armies" concludes, "Den" continues. ($3.00)

#11/FEBRUARY, 1978: New adventures of Barbarella, wraparound cover and center spread by Nino, plus Moebius, Corben, et al. ($3.00)

#12/MARCH, 1978: Swashbuckling "Onon" makes a debut, courtesy of Gray Morrow, and there's more Barbarella, more "Urm," and yet more "Den." ($3.00)

#13/APRIL, 1978: Our first anniversary issue! A thirty-page insert from Paradise 9, and Barbarella gives birth, while Den wraps it up ($3.00)

#14/MAY, 1978: "Urm the Mad" waves bye-bye but "Orion" and "Barbarella" continue, and Alex Nino tips his hat. ($3.00)

#15/JUNE, 1978: Corben introduces Shahrazad, Sturgeon's classic "More Than Human" is illustrated, more "Barbarella," and the origins of "Heilman" ($3.00)

#16/JULY, 1978: A happy ending for 'Barbarella," a sad ending for ' 1996," the resumption of Druillet's "Gail," yet more "Heilman," "Orion," "More Than Human," and Corben's "Arabian Nights." ($3.00)

#17/AUGUST, 1978: Sorry—SOLD OUT!

#18/SEPTEMBER, 1978: Corben's 'Sindbad,' Moebius's "Major," "Heilman," "Orion," "Lone Sloane on Gail," and Harlan Ellison too ($3.00)

#19/OCTOBER, 1978: 'Exterminator 17,' Ellison's illustrated "Glass Goblin," the debut of McKie's "So Beautiful and So Dangerous," plus the usual ($3.00)

#20/NOVEMBER, 1978: Twenty pages of the Delany/Chaykin 'Empire,' more "Sindbad," 'Exterminator ' Major Grubert, Heilman's final rebirth, more. ($3.00)

#21/DECEMBER, 1978: The stocking's full with ' Orion, ' Kirchner's "Tarot," and twelve beautiful pages of Moebius. ($3.00)

#22/JANUARY, 1979: Trina makes her debut here, and Druillet concludes ' Gail," plus McKie and Corben. How much can you take? ($3.00)

#23/FEBRUARY, 1979: "Galactic Geographic," "Starcrown," Corben's 'Sindbad," McKie s ' So Beautiful and So Dangerous ' plus Moebius Bilal, and Macedo ($3.00)

#24/MARCH, 1979: Twenty pages of Chaykin illustrating Bester's "The Stars My Destination," ' Starcrown" II, and Ellison's late show ($3.00)

#25/APRIL, 1979: Our second birthday bash, with Chaykin's "Gideon Faust," and 'Alien portfolio, Val Mayerik's "Time Out," more. ($3.00)

#26/MAY, 1979: It s all-American(except for Druillet's 'Disco" and a Proust joke) fifteen entries incuding Corben, Morrow, the illustrated "Alien ' ($3.00)

#27/JUNE, 1979: Fifty-four pages of 'Captain Future " plus more illustrated 'Alien," and the final episode of "So Beautiful and So Dangerous '" ($3.00)

#28/JULY, 1979: Bodé's ' Zooks" premieres.Corben s ' Sindbad ' concludes. Morrow and Moébius continue, Mike Hinge debuts ($3.00)

#29/AUGUST, 1979: Caza steals the show with "New Ark City," plus Mayerik, Suydam, 'Galactic Geographic," Bodé, more. ($3.00)

#30/SEPTEMBER, 1979: 'Elric, ' "Buck Rogers," a lizard named Elvis, and "Little Red V-3," alongside Montellier and Moebius. ($3.00)

#31/OCTOBER, 1979: Halloween strikes with a tribute to H P Lovecraft with Moebius, Druillet, Suydam, others ($3.00)

#32/NOVEMBER, 1979: Let us give thanks for Corben's ' Rowlf,' Bodé's 'Zooks ' Brunner's "Elric," Chaykin's ' Stars My Destination ' Moeb us, and more ($3.00)

#33/DECEMBER, 1979: A Christmas package from Caza, Corben, Kofoed, Suydam, Stiles. Trina, Moebius, and Ellison, plus 'Gnomes" and ' Giants. ' ($3.00)

#34/JANUARY, 1980: A new year—*a new decade*—begins with a new look for *HM* with the debut of four new columnists, new artists Neal McPheeters and Dan Steffan, the conclusion of Corben's "Rowlf," and much more! ($3.00)

#35/FEBRUARY, 1980: An eerie Couratin cover adorns this winter issue Corben's "The Beast of Wolfton" begins, McKie Experiments with the Air Pump, and we join Matt Howarth on a crazed acid trip ($3.00)

#36/MARCH, 1980 Why did The Crevasse take Jeannette? For the answer read the Schuiten Bros strip! Plus Corben, Matena Moebius, and Lee Marrs's "Good Vibrations." ($2.50)

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OF NEEDLE AND THREAD

BY BILAL

HIBERNA
GOOD MORNING, MY FATHER... MY FATHER HAS SLEPT EXACTLY 333 DAYS, EIGHT HOURS, AND 12 MINUTES... I HOPE THAT MY FA--
OKAY, OKAY! GET ME ERNEST! WHOEVER YOU ARE--!
AND QUICKLY!
I'M AFRAID, MY FATHER, THAT THAT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE... ERNEST HAS RECENTLY DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE... I HAVE A FEELING HE WENT TO LOOK FOR GOD... I SHOULD ADD, HOWEVER, THAT HE WANTED TO WATCH OVER YOU PERSONALLY AND SUPERVISE YOUR SLEEP.

COMPLETELY CRAZY. THIS ERNEST... CRAZY AND DANGEROUS... HE SHOULD BE SENT BACK TO EARTH... HE'S STILL UNDER GUARANTEE...
PREPARE AN ESCAPE CRAFT FOR ME, PLEASE.
GOOD GOD! HE'S THE ONE WHO CUT ME UP LIKE THIS?!
I THINK SO, MY FATHER... HE WAS TAKING CARE OF YOU BY HIMSELF...
I THINK IT WOULD BE WISE TO DISCONNECT YOURSELF FROM HIM... IT'S OBVIOUS THAT HE PRESENTS GRAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.
THAT LITTLE BASTARD... YOU COULD SAY THAT I SHAPED HIS BELIEFS... THAT I GAVE HIM A SOUL...
HE'S GOING TO PAY FOR THIS...
SO, IS THE CRAFT READY?
THAT LITTLE BASTARD..

ERNEST! STOP YOUR FOOLISHNESS AND COME BACK TO THE BASE...
...OR I'LL DISCONNECT YOU!
FUCK OFF!
PROHIBITED TO MORTALS IMMORTALS ONLY
AMPEX-TUNICH

HAHAHA HAHAHA
SHIT!
AAAAAAAAA
END

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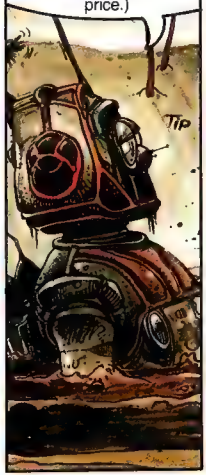

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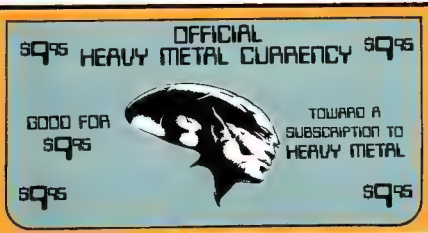

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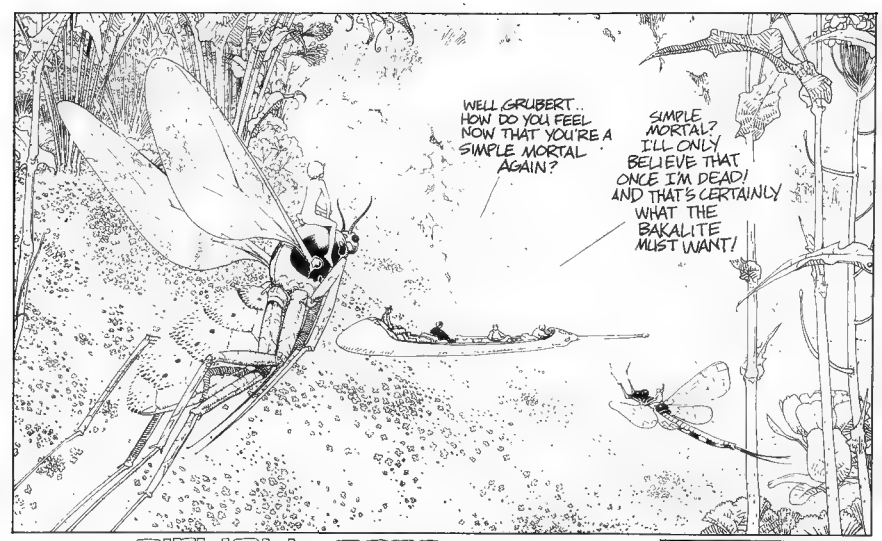
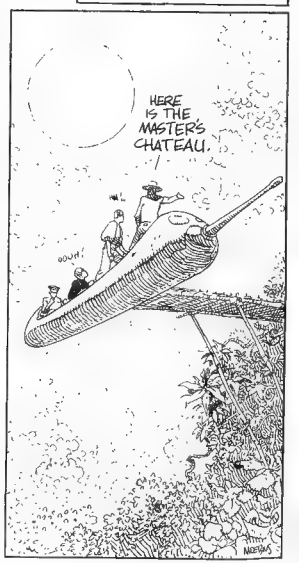

WELL GRUBERT.. HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW THAT YOU'RE A SIMPLE MORTAL AGAIN?
SIMPLE MORTAL? I'LL ONLY BELIEVE THAT ONCE I'M DEAD! AND THAT'S CERTAINLY WHAT THE BAKALITE MUST WANT!

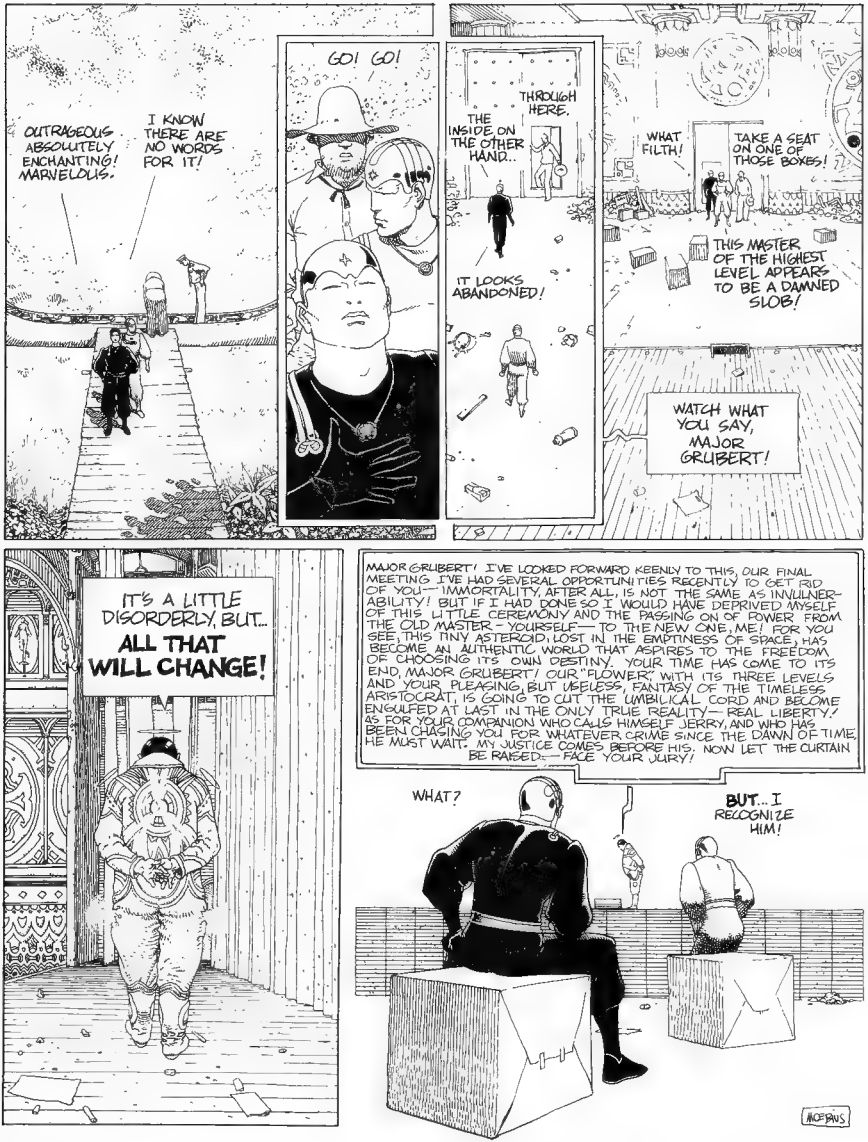
the airtight garage

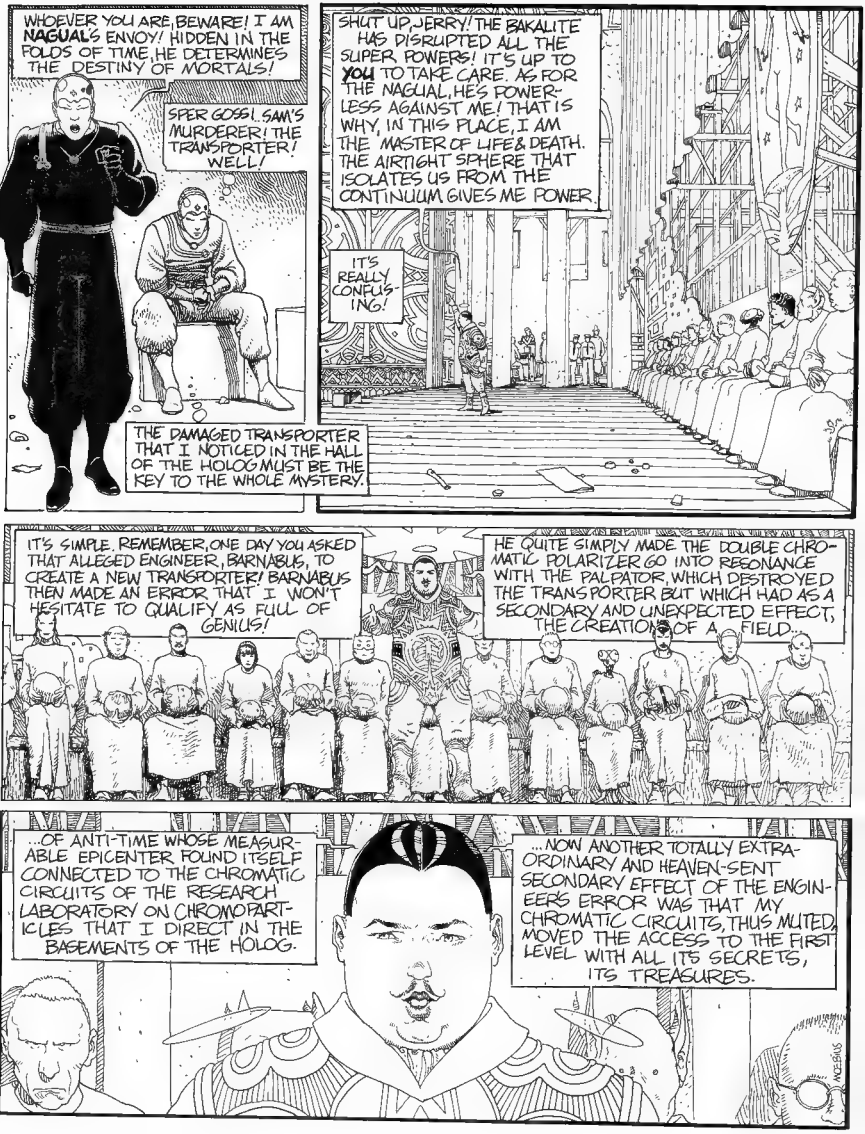
by MOEBIUS

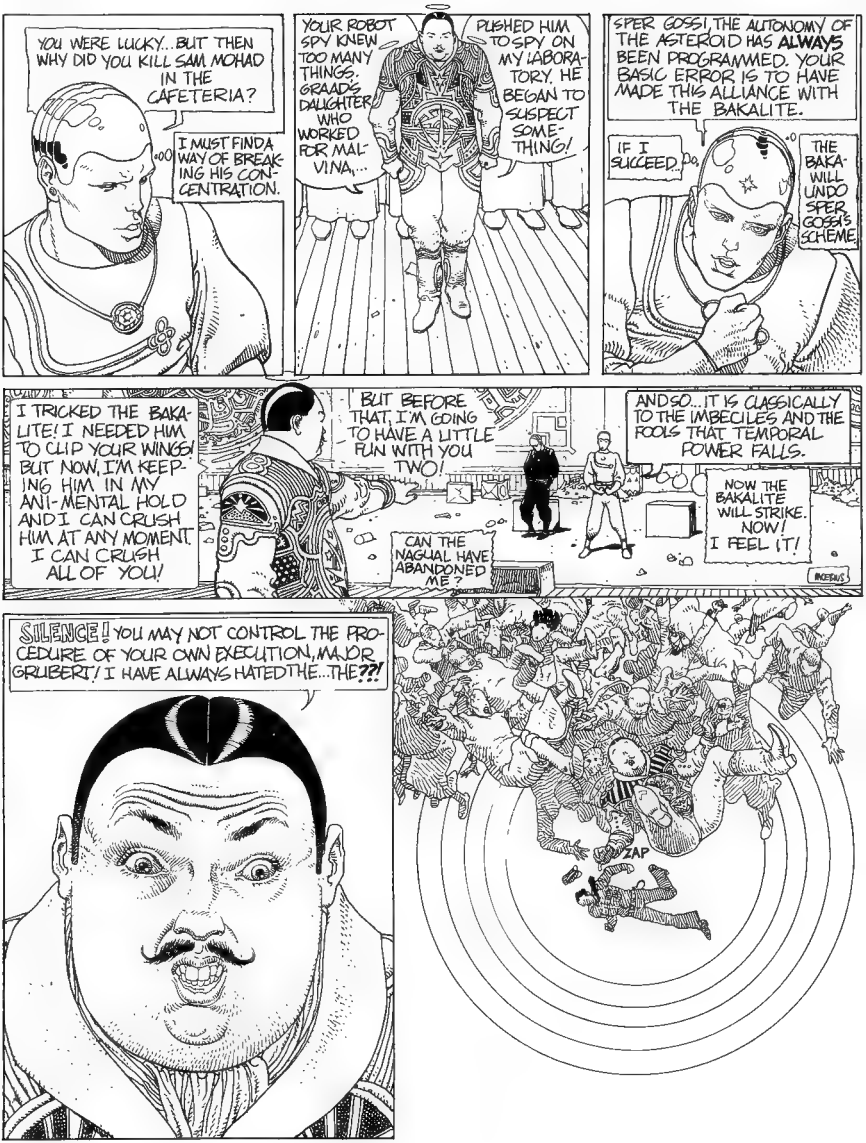
THE STORY SO FAR: IT WAS A BAKALITE TRICK!

NOTHING HERE IS MINE. THIS PARADISE WAS ONCE CREATED BY A WOMAN. IT'S BEEN CENTURIES SINCE SHE WAS HERE...HER NAME...AH! — LADY KOWALSKI! SHE WAS SO...
SILENCE!.. WE'RE ARRIVING!



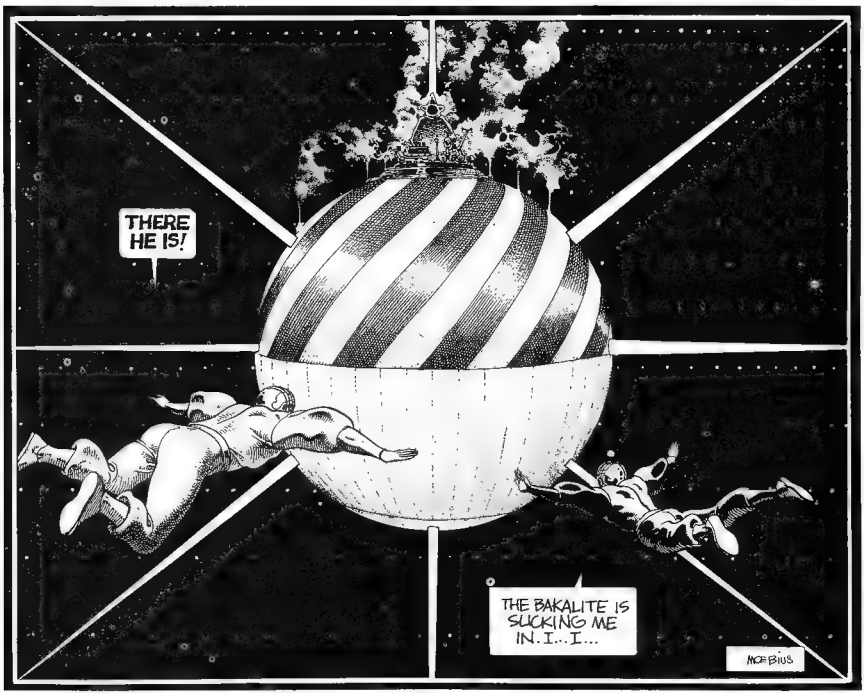

OUTRAGEOUS ABSOLUTELY ENCHANTING! MARVELOUS.
I KNOW THERE ARE NO WORDS FOR IT!
GO! GO!
THE INSIDE ON THE OTHER HAND..
THROUGH HERE.
IT LOOKS ABANDONED!
WHAT FILTH!
TAKE A SEAT ON ONE OF THOSE BOXES!
THIS MASTER OF THE HIGHEST LEVEL APPEARS TO BE A DAMNED SLOB!
WATCH WHAT YOU SAY, MAJOR GRUBERT!
IT'S A LITTLE DISORDERLY, BUT... ALL THAT WILL CHANGE!
MAJOR GRUBERT! I'VE LOOKED FORWARD KEENLY TO THIS, OUR FINAL MEETING. I'VE HAD SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES RECENTLY TO GET RID OF YOU— IMMORTALITY, AFTER ALL, IS NOT THE SAME AS INVULNERABILITY! BUT IF I HAD DONE SO I WOULD HAVE DEPRIVED MYSELF OF THIS LITTLE CEREMONY AND THE PASSING ON OF POWER FROM THE OLD MASTER - YOURSELF— TO THE NEW ONE, ME! FOR YOU SEE, THIS TINY ASTEROID, LOST IN THE EMPTINESS OF SPACE, HAS BECOME AN AUTHENTIC WORLD THAT ASPIRES TO THE FREEDOM OF CHOOSING ITS OWN DESTINY. YOUR TIME HAS COME TO ITS END, MAJOR GRUBERT! OUR "FLOWER" WITH ITS THREE LEVELS AND YOUR PLEASING, BUT USELESS, FANTASY OF THE TIMELESS ARISTOCRAT, IS GOING TO CUT THE UMBILICAL CORD AND BECOME ENGULFED AT LAST IN THE ONLY TRUE REALITY— REAL LIBERTY! AS FOR YOUR COMPANION WHO CALLS HIMSELF JERRY, AND WHO HAS BEEN CHASING YOU FOR WHATEVER CRIME SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME, HE MUST WAIT. MY JUSTICE COMES BEFORE HIS. NOW LET THE CURTAIN BE RAISED— FACE YOUR JURY!
WHAT?
BUT... I RECOGNIZE HIM!
MŒBIUS

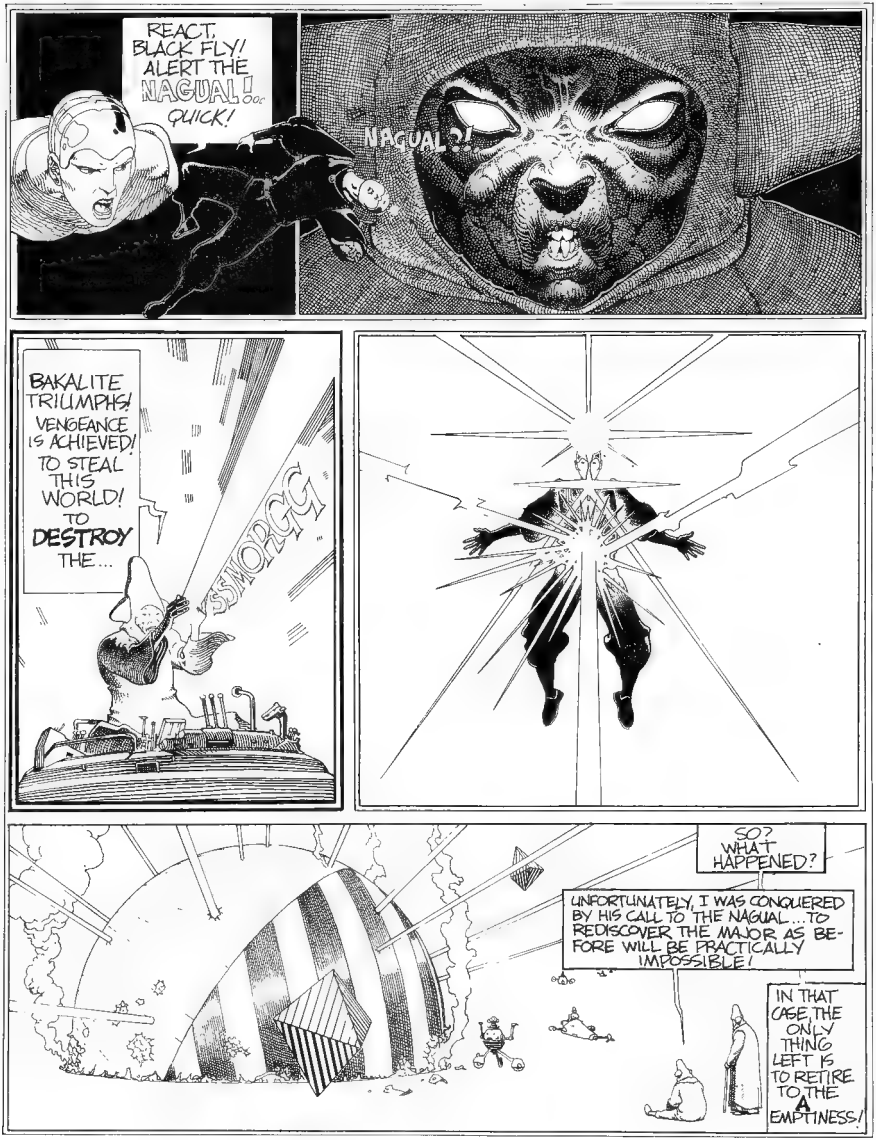

WHOEVER YOU ARE, BEWARE! I AM NAGUAL'S ENVOY! HIDDEN IN THE FOLDS OF TIME, HE DETERMINES THE DESTINY OF MORTALS!
SPER GOSS! SAM'S MURDERER! THE TRANSPORTER! WELL!
THE DAMAGED TRANSPORTER THAT I NOTICED IN THE HALL OF THE HOLOG MUST BE THE KEY TO THE WHOLE MYSTERY.
SHUT UP, JERRY! THE BAKALITE HAS DISRUPTED ALL THE SUPER POWERS! IT'S UP TO YOU TO TAKE CARE. AS FOR THE NAGUAL, HE'S POWERLESS AGAINST ME! THAT IS WHY, IN THIS PLACE, I AM THE MASTER OF LIFE & DEATH. THE AIRTIGHT SPHERE THAT ISOLATES US FROM THE CONTINUUM GIVES ME POWER.
IT'S REALLY CONFUSING!
IT'S SIMPLE. REMEMBER, ONE DAY YOU ASKED THAT ALLEGED ENGINEER, BARNABUS, TO CREATE A NEW TRANSPORTER! BARNABUS THEN MADE AN ERROR THAT I WON'T HESITATE TO QUALIFY AS FULL OF GENIUS!
HE QUITE SIMPLY MADE THE DOUBLE CHROMATIC POLARIZER GO INTO RESONANCE WITH THE PALPATOR, WHICH DESTROYED THE TRANSPORTER BUT WHICH HAD AS A SECONDARY AND UNEXPECTED EFFECT, THE CREATION OF A FIELD...
...OF ANTI-TIME WHOSE MEASURABLE EPICENTER FOUND ITSELF CONNECTED TO THE CHROMATIC CIRCUITS OF THE RESEARCH LABORATORY ON CHROMOPARTICLES THAT I DIRECT IN THE BASEMENTS OF THE HOLOG.
...NOW ANOTHER TOTALLY EXTRAORDINARY AND HEAVEN-SENT SECONDARY EFFECT OF THE ENGINEER'S ERROR WAS THAT MY CHROMATIC CIRCUITS, THUS MUTED, MOVED THE ACCESS TO THE FIRST LEVEL WITH ALL ITS SECRETS, ITS TREASURES.
MOEBIUS

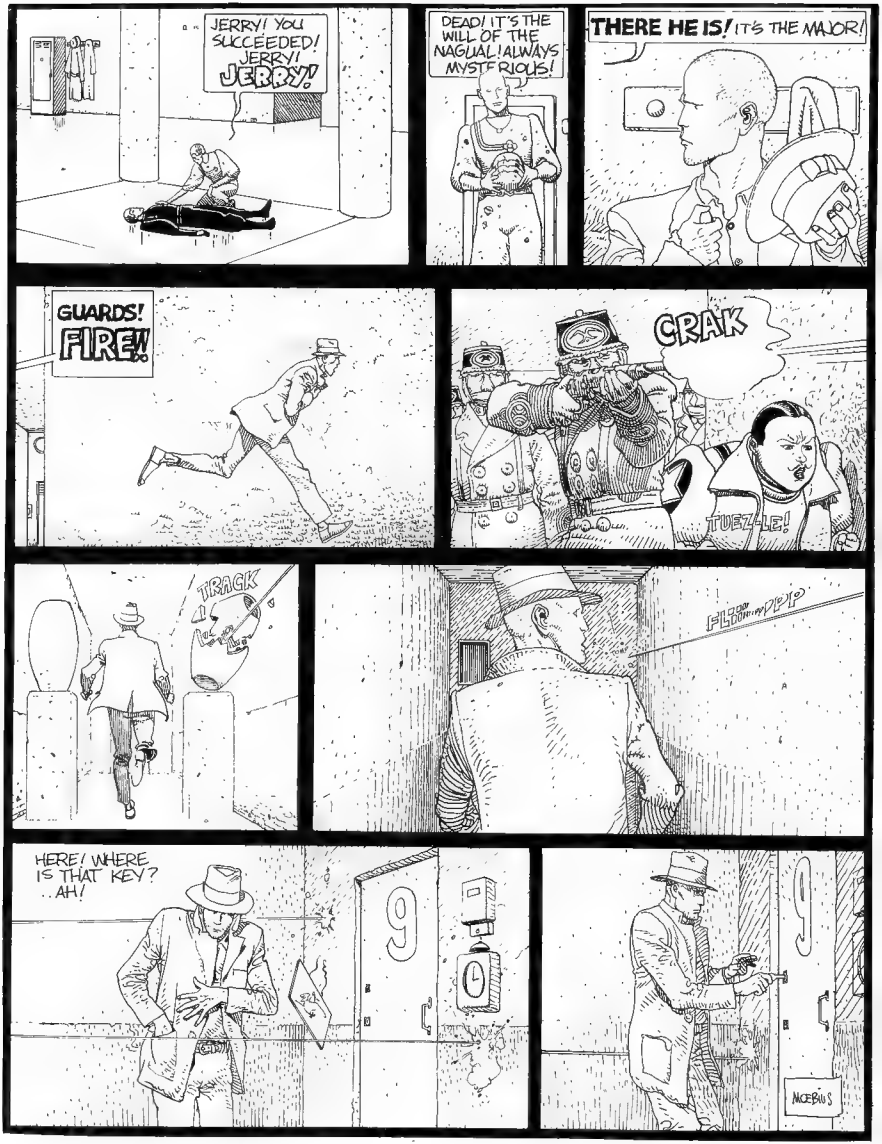

YOU WERE LUCKY...BUT THEN WHY DID YOU KILL SAM MOHAD IN THE CAFETERIA?
I MUST FIND A WAY OF BREAKING HIS CONCENTRATION.
YOUR ROBOT SPY KNEW TOO MANY THINGS. GRAADS DAUGHTER WHO WORKED FOR MALVINA,...
PUSHED HIM TO SPY ON MY LABORATORY. HE BEGAN TO SUSPECT SOMETHING!
SPER GOSSI, THE AUTONOMY OF THE ASTEROID HAS ALWAYS BEEN PROGRAMMED. YOUR BASIC ERROR IS TO HAVE MADE THIS ALLIANCE WITH THE BAKALITE.
IF I SUCCEED,...
THE BAKA- WILL UNDO SPER GOSSI'S SCHEME
I TRICKED THE BAKALITE! I NEEDED HIM TO CLIP YOUR WINGS! BUT NOW, I'M KEEPING HIM IN MY ANTI-MENTAL HOLD AND I CAN CRUSH HIM AT ANY MOMENT. I CAN CRUSH ALL OF YOU!
BUT BEFORE THAT, I'M GOING TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN WITH YOU TWO!
CAN THE NAGUAL HAVE ABANDONED ME?
AND SO...IT IS CLASSICALLY TO THE IMBECILES AND THE FOOLS THAT TEMPORAL POWER FALLS.
NOW THE BAKALITE WILL STRIKE. NOW! I FEEL IT!
MOEBIUS
SILENCE! YOU MAY NOT CONTROL THE PROCEDURE OF YOUR OWN EXECUTION, MAJOR GRUBERT! I HAVE ALWAYS HATED THE...THE???
ZAP

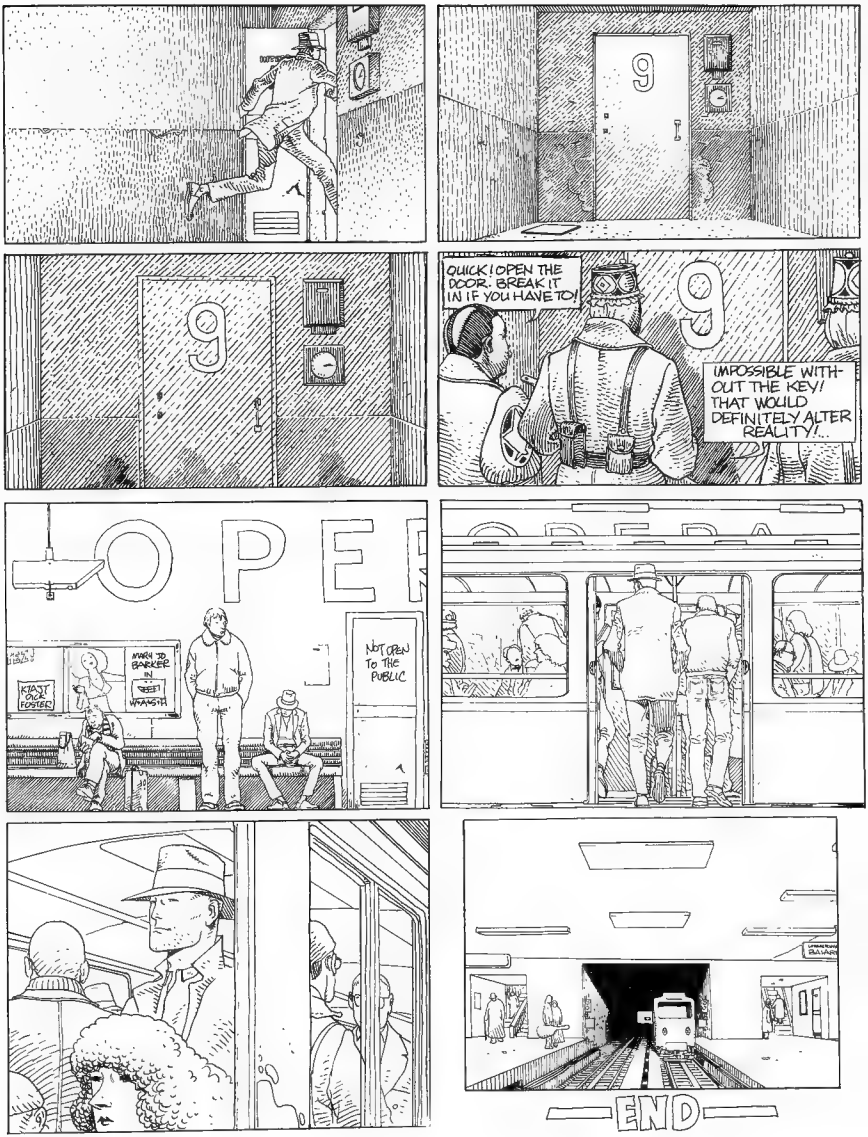
WE'RE FALLING IN THE INTERIOR OF A METAL STRUCTURE.
GRUBERT, THERE WAS A SLIP IN GOSSI'S SCHEME, WASN'T THERE?
BE READY TO ACT! THIS IS A BAKALITE MANEUVER!

BUT THEN, IF THERE'S BEEN A SLIP IN HIS SCHEME, I WILL BE ABLE TO RECONTACT THE NAGUAL.
EXACTLY. CAREFUL!


THERE HE IS!
THE BAKALITE IS SUCKING ME IN. I... I...
MŒBIUS


REACT, BLACK FLY! ALERT THE NAGUAL! QUICK!
NAGUAL?!
BAKALITE TRIUMPHS! VENGEANCE IS ACHIEVED! TO STEAL THIS WORLD! TO DESTROY THE...
SMORGG
SO? WHAT HAPPENED?
UNFORTUNATELY, I WAS CONQUERED BY HIS CALL TO THE NAGUAL... TO REDISCOVER THE MAJOR AS BEFORE WILL BE PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE!
IN THAT CASE, THE ONLY THING LEFT IS TO RETIRE TO THE A EMPTINESS!


JERRY! YOU SUCCEEDED! JERRY! JERRY!
DEAD! IT'S THE WILL OF THE NAGUAL! ALWAYS MYSTERIOUS!
THERE HE IS! IT'S THE MAJOR!
GUARDS! FIRE!!
CRAK
TUEZ-LE!
TRACK
FLOOM
HERE! WHERE IS THAT KEY? .. AH!
9
9
MOEBIUS


9
QUICK! OPEN THE DOOR. BREAK IT IN IF YOU HAVE TO!
IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THE KEY! THAT WOULD DEFINITELY ALTER REALITY!..
OPEN
MARY TO BARKER IN
KRAST DICK FOSTER
NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
END

PART TWO
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25
OH, MY GODDESS! OH, BEAUTIFUL LADY OF THE SKIES! WHERE ARE YOU? DON'T YOU HEAR THE VOICE OF YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT? THROUGH WHAT CONSTELLATION IS YOUR SHIP OF FIRE AND LIGHT FLYING?
WHAT STAR IS IT RESTING ON? MY SOUL NEVER LEAVES YOU. THIRTY TUNS HAVE PASSED, AND THE HAIR OF THE OLD CHILAM IS GRAY BY NOW. BUT WILL YOU RETURN ONE DAY? AND WHEN YOU DO, MY GODDESS, WILL YOU RETURN BEAUTY AND YOUTH TO CHILAM, WHO WANTS TO SERVE YOU?
WHO'S HE TALKING TO?
DON'T FORGET TO GET YOUR CORN ON THE WAY BACK.
CHAMPAKOL! LISTEN TO ME! WE HAVE TO GO! IT'S ALMOST NIGHT!
YOU'RE RIGHT. WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO. WE'VE SEEN ENOUGH FOR TODAY.
MY WORK LASTED A LONG TIME. I'LL TELL MY MOTHER THAT I GOT LOST LOOKING FOR A SHORT-CUT. WILL WE SEE EACH OTHER TOMORROW?

THIS IS IT! HE'S GONE! YOU CAN COME NOW!
YOU'RE SURE THAT NO ONE SAW US?
THERE'S NO DANGER! I'M GUARDING THE OBSERVATORY TONIGHT, AND WE'LL BE ALONE.
FOLLOW ME. I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE TERRACE OF THE TOWER. YOU CAN SEE HOW BEAUTIFUL EVERYTHING IS FROM UP THERE.
I'M SCARED.
LOOK!
OOOH! IT'S MAGNIFICENT! THE TOWN AND THE FOREST AND THE SKY...

THE SUN MAKES YOUR EYES SHINE LIKE JEWELS. BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS... I WANT YOU SO MUCH...
TAKE ME... HOLD ME, MY LOVE...

THIS OLD FORTRESS, YOUR WORDS ARE LIKE PRAYERS... I THOUGHT OF THIS ALL LAST NIGHT.
THE RUINS ARE CALLED "ANCIENT MAYATAN." CHILAM LED ME HERE BEFORE. HE SAYS THEY'VE ALWAYS EXISTED, THAT THE GODS WERE BORN HERE, AND THAT IT'S HERE THE WORLD WILL END. I IMAGINE THAT THEY WERE BUILT BY MEN LONG, LONG AGO.
I MUST LEAVE YOU NOW. MY PARENTS WILL START TO WORRY
WAIT! I'LL LIGHT THIS TORCH AND COME DOWN WITH YOU.

CHAMPAKOU! THERE'S SOMEONE!
DON'T BE SCARED! IT'S ONLY "CHA," THE GOD OF THE RAIN AND GUARDIAN OF THE RUINS. DESPITE HIS GIANT TEETH AND HIS SARCASTIC AIR, HE'S NOT EVIL AND HERE'S WHERE CHILAM STAYS.
AH!? CHAMPAKOU! YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK? IF YOU WANT TO FIGURE OUT THE SECRET OF YOUR TEACHER, WON'T YOU FIND THE ANSWER HERE?
YOU'RE MAD! IF HE FOUND ME IN THERE, HE'D KILL ME!
WELL, SO LONG!
THAT LITTLE FOX! SHE'S GIVEN ME A TEMPTING SUGGESTION!

ITZAMNA MUST PROTECT ME. THIS IS THE ONLY MEANS I HAVE TO FIND OUT MORE.
THERE'S THE STRANGE STATUE, BUT WHERE'S THE CHEST?
HERE! FINALLY! LITTLE CHEST, DOES THE INSTRUMENT INSIDE YOU HAVE A MAGIC POWER?
WHAT IS IT MADE OF? OF METAL?
OF GOLD? NO. OF SILVER? I DON'T THINK SO. IT'S SO SMOOTH AND SHINY.

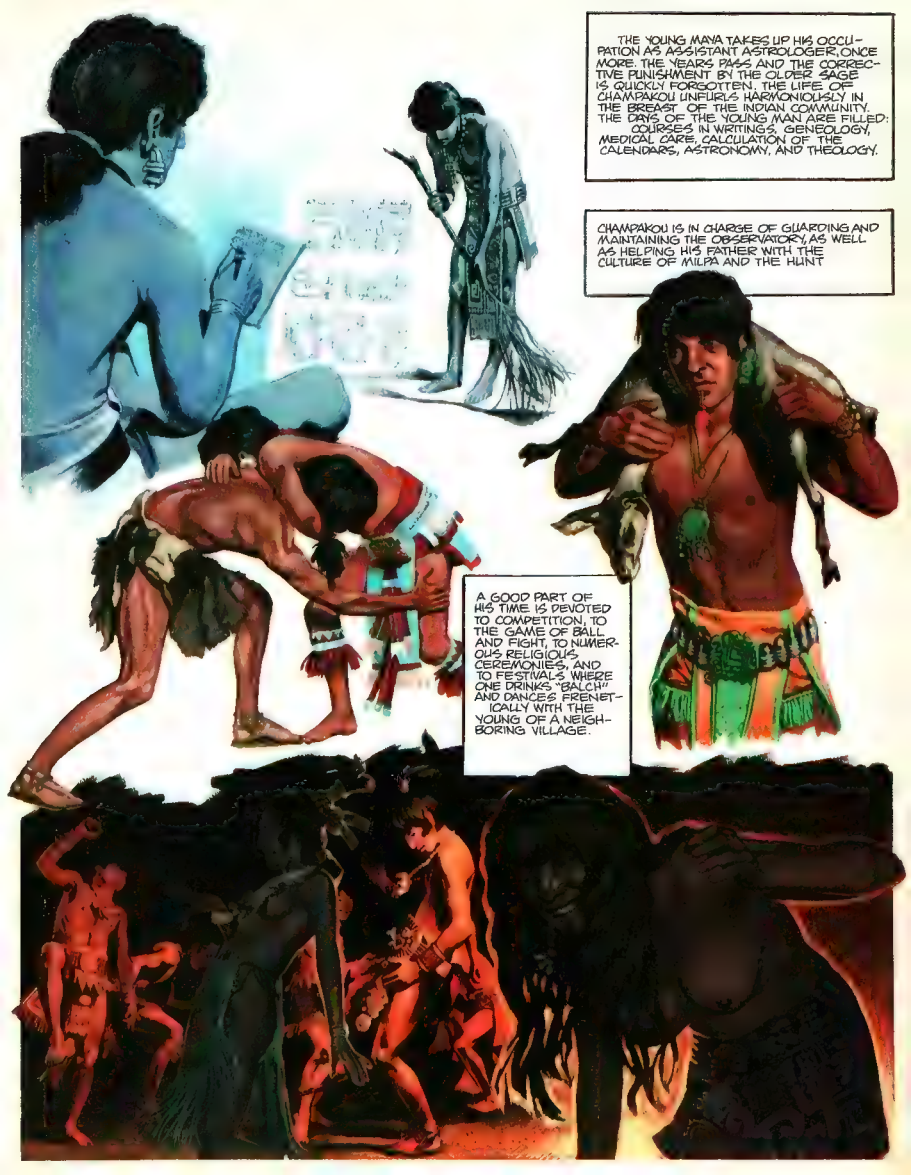
AAAH!
TEACHER!
GET RID OF THAT, YOU LITTLE MONSTER! AND PUT YOUR HANDS AGAINST THE WALL! UP AGAINST THE WALL!
I'M SORRY, TEACHER! PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
YOU DARED TO PROFANE SACRED OBJECTS, YOU! YOU, WHOM I PUT ALL MY CONFIDENCE IN. HOW COULD YOU BETRAY ME LIKE THAT? YOU SHOULD BE CURSED! YOU DESERVE TO BE WHIPPED! TAKE THAT, AND THAT!

AT LEAST YOU HAVE SUBMITTED TO YOUR PUNISHMENT WITH COURAGE AND DIGNITY! NOW GET UP!

TAKE THIS OINTMENT AND PUT IT ON YOUR WOUNDS. THEN GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM AND STAY THERE WITHOUT NOURISHMENT. GET RID OF YOUR INSOLENCE AND PRAY TO THE GODS TO FORGIVE YOU. NOW GO!

THIRTEEN DAYS OF ABSTINENCE AND PAINFUL MORTIFICATIONS IMPOSED ON CHAMPAKOU MAKE HIM REGRET HIS ERROR

WATCH OVER CHAMPAKOU, OH KANAB KU, MY FATHER, STOP THE EVIL WITHIN HIM. DON'T LET HIM DIE FOR MY SACRILEGE. NOW I SEE YOU AND I KNOW YOU, MY LORD, MY MOTHER, AND MY FATHER. PARDON YOUR SON. I KNOW THAT WHAT I PAID FOR MY TRANSGRESSION WAS NOT GREAT, BUT TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY. TOMORROW, CHAMPAKOU WILL BE ANOTHER MAN.

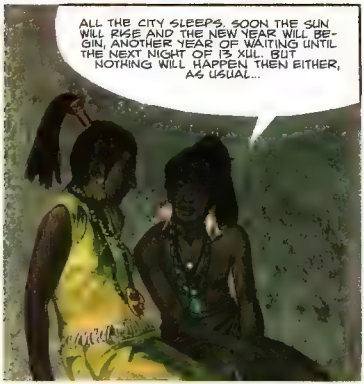

THE YOUNG MAYA TAKES UP HIS OCCUPATION AS ASSISTANT ASTROLOGER, ONCE MORE. THE YEARS PASS AND THE CORRECTIVE PUNISHMENT BY THE OLDER SAGE IS QUICKLY FORGOTTEN. THE LIFE OF CHAMPAKOU UNFURLS HARMONIOUSLY IN THE BREAST OF THE INDIAN COMMUNITY. THE DAYS OF THE YOUNG MAN ARE FILLED: COURSES IN WRITINGS, GENEOLOGY, MEDICAL CARE, CALCULATION OF THE CALENDARS, ASTRONOMY, AND THEOLOGY.
CHAMPAKOU IS IN CHARGE OF GUARDING AND MAINTAINING THE OBSERVATORY, AS WELL AS HELPING HIS FATHER WITH THE CULTURE OF MILPA AND THE HUNT
A GOOD PART OF HIS TIME IS DEVOTED TO COMPETITION, TO THE GAME OF BALL AND FIGHT, TO NUMEROUS RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, AND TO FESTIVALS WHERE ONE DRINKS "BALCH" AND DANCES FRENETICALLY WITH THE YOUNG OF A NEIGHBORING VILLAGE.

IN THIS FAR AWAY EPOCH OF THE ANCIENT EMPIRE, THE BARBARIAN TOLTECS FROM THE NORTH CONTAMINATED THE MAYAS ONCE MORE WITH THEIR MACABRE AND EXCESSIVE TASTE FOR HUMAN SACRIFICE. THE GODS AT TIMES DEMAND HUMAN BLOOD, BUT THE OFFERING OF FLOWERS AND OTHER PRODUCE IS MORE COMMON.
CHAMPAKOU, WHO DOESN'T GO OUT WITH WOMEN, STILL HAS A PROFOUND INTEREST IN THE DOLL OF JADE, WHO HAS BLOSSOMED INTO A WOMAN.
SHE HAS BECOME A SUPERB WOMAN, THE WIFE OF CHECTUMAL, AN INDIAN OF HIGH RANK, THE NEW NACOM, COMMANDER OF THE GOVERNOR'S GUARDS. CHECTUMAL DOES NOT STOP HIS WIFE FROM VISITING OUR HERO WHEN HE'S LEFT FOR A DIPLOMATIC MISSION, WHICH HAPPENS OFTEN.
AN IMPORTANT EVENT OCCURS: A WAR AGAINST THE INHABITANTS OF UAXACTUN IS HAPPILY TERMINATED BY A PEACEFUL ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLES, AND CHAMPAKOU IS, AT THIS TIME, ABOUT TO FINISH HIS APPRENTICESHIP

...ONE DAY, HE IS OFFICIALLY NAMED AHKIN AND SECOND CHILAM* OF SAYATAL. HIS MASTER AND HE ARE IN CHARGE OF THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS AND ASTRONOMICAL WORKS AS WELL AS THEOLOGY
*AHKIN AND CHILAM=PRIEST AND SOOTHSAYER.
ANOTHER MAN HIS AGE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RITUAL SACRIFICES. THE BATABOOB, THE GOVERNOR OF THE CITY, GIVES A NEW FUNCTION TO THESE TWO ELECTED MEN, SO THAT ALL THE ENIGMAS FROM THE PAST ARE NOW FORGOTTEN.
THE MYSTERY BEGINS ONCE AGAIN. HOWEVER, ONE KATOUN AND FIVE HOURS LATER, WHEN THE OLD SAGE IS IN AGONY.
OH, KINICHKAKMO, LIGHT OF DAY, SOON THE SOUL OF YOUR WELL-LOVED SERVANT CHILAM WILL LEAVE THE WORLD OF MEN. ACCEPT HIM AS ONE OF YOUR OWN IN YOUR PROCESSION OF HEROES, HE WHO ALWAYS SERVED YOU SINCERELY AND DEVOTEDLY

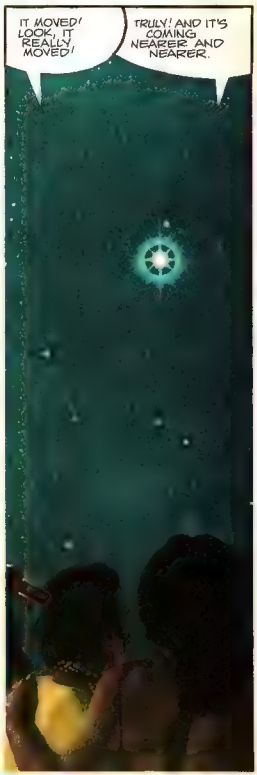
CHAMPAKOL!
I'M HERE, TEACHER!
HAVE THE OTHERS GONE?
I'M ALONE. OH, MY TEACHER, PERMIT ME TO STAY NEAR YOU TO PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR LONG VOYAGE.
THE STATUE . THE CHEST WITH THE AMULET OF BRILLIANT METAL . DO YOU REMEMBER IT? I.. I . GIVE IT TO YOU.
I WILL TAKE GREAT CARE OF THIS SOUVENIR OF OUR FRIENDSHIP, TEACHER
THANK YOU, MY CHILD. NOW, LISTEN TO MY WORDS. LOOK TOWARD THE SKY AT THE FULL MOON ON THE THIRTEENTH OF XUL. LOOK AT THE SKY EVERY YEAR. THE LADY. SHE WILL RETURN.. SHE PROMISED ME . YOU WILL UNDERSTAND . GOOD-BYE, MY FRIEND .
WHAT DID HE SAY?
HIS SPIRIT IS RISING TOWARD THE SUN. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WANTED

THIS IS WHAT CHILAM CONFIDED TO ME, AND FOR 3 TUNS, SINCE THE NIGHT OF 13 XUL, I'VE WATCHED THE SKY, WAITING FOR I DON'T KNOW WHAT AND YOUR MASTER, CHECTUMAL? HOW IS HE? HE HAD TO ACCOMPANY AN AMBASSADOR ON A TRIP TO THE EAST, TO TEOTIHUACAN, RIGHT?
IT'S BEEN OVER A MONTH SINCE HE'S BEEN GONE. HE'S NOT MEAN, JUST BORING, SO IT'S FOR THE BETTER!


ALL THE CITY SLEEPS. SOON THE SUN WILL RISE AND THE NEW YEAR WILL BEGIN, ANOTHER YEAR OF WAITING UNTIL THE NEXT NIGHT OF 13 XUL. BUT NOTHING WILL HAPPEN THEN EITHER, AS USUAL...

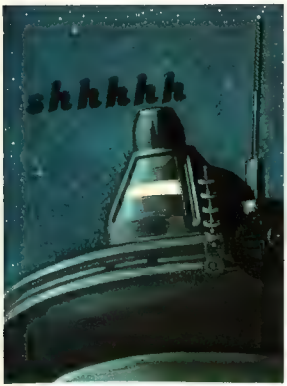
I'M JUST THINKING ABOUT WHAT CHILAM DREAMED
BUT THAT SHIMMERING METAL THERE. FROM WHERE IS IT COMING? AN ORIGINAL TALISMAN, MAYBE?

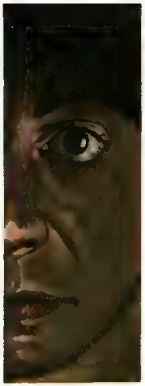
CHAMPAKOL! LOOK!
THAT LUMINOUS POINT! IT'S XAMAN EK, THE POLAR STAR. AH! NO! RIGHT NOW XAMAN EK IS HIDDEN BY THAT PYRAMID.

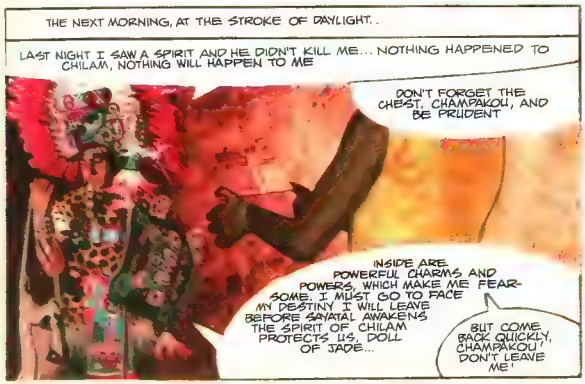

IT MOVED! LOOK, IT REALLY MOVED!
TRULY! AND IT'S COMING NEARER AND NEARER.

AND IT'S SHINING BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER! CHAMPAKOU! WHERE IS IT GOING? LISTEN TO THE WHISTLE!
IT'S NOT A TYPICAL CELESTIAL PHENOMENON. THE LIGHT HAS SETTLED RIGHT IN THE FOREST. YOU CAN SEE IT CLEARLY, AND IT'S ON THE SIDE OF MAYATLAN.
DOLL OF JADE! OUR WAIT IS OVER! THE GRAND NIGHT OF CHILAM HAS ARRIVED, FINALLY! WE'RE GOING TO UNDERSTAND THE SECRET OF THE OLD MAN. WAIT FOR ME HERE. I'M GOING TO GO OVER THERE!
CHAMPAKOU! BE CAREFUL! DON'T GO THERE! NOW, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.. IT'S CERTAINLY DANGEROUS!

Dzzz






THE NEXT MORNING, AT THE STROKE OF DAYLIGHT..
LAST NIGHT I SAW A SPIRIT AND HE DIDN'T KILL ME... NOTHING HAPPENED TO CHILAM, NOTHING WILL HAPPEN TO ME
DON'T FORGET THE CHEST, CHAMPAKOU, AND BE PRUDENT
INSIDE ARE POWERFUL CHARMS AND POWERS, WHICH MAKE ME FEARSOME. I MUST GO TO FACE MY DESTINY I WILL LEAVE BEFORE SANATAL AWAKENS THE SPIRIT OF CHILAM PROTECTS US, DOLL OF JADE...
BUT COME BACK QUICKLY, CHAMPAKOU! DON'T LEAVE ME!

END OF EPISODE TO BE CONTINUED..

SIDEBAR
by Norman Spinrad

continued from page 6

in and out. Of course, neither studio admits it on the credits because that would be an admission of defeat up front. Nor would Paramount or Disney likely admit that both scripts were still being rewritten *while the films were shot*. If you don't have a finished shooting script when you start shooting, you're admitting to yourself that what you do have should not be shot, but you're going to go ahead and do it anyway because the project has passed the financial point of no return.

The *Black Hole* script was conceived by a Disney executive and brought from inspiration through several treatments and revisions by hired hands, many of whom may have known up front that there was no chance it would turn out to be their script. The result is an incoherent mess that is *nobody's script*, rife with scientific absurdities, robot gunfighters, dangling ends, and a finale that attempts to use pure special effects signifying nothing to bail it out of its own case of terminal chaos. Even as the shooting began, they were still rewriting to work in all the new special effects they kept dreaming up.

The *Star Trek* script was conceived by Gene Roddenberry, no matter what the credits say. How could it not be? Mighty was the wish of Paramount to do *Star Trek* without Roddenberry, the man who had twice gone over the heads of the powers that be to the public, and had won. But this was just plain impossible. *Star Trek* without Paramount would've been a piece of cake, but *Star Trek* without Roddenberry would've been hara-kiri by the studio.

But what metamorphosed slowly into the film script started out as a concept for a two-hour pilot of a new TV series, not a feature film. Half a season's worth of scripts and treatments had been accumulated for the series that Paramount was going to use as a "line reader" for its "Fourth Network" scheme before that deal fell apart. Sets were under construction. Thus, *Star Trek the Motion Picture*, conceived as a feature *well after* work on what was to become its script, had begun.

But since this was going to be a feature, not a TV pilot, it needed "production values," right? Like *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*, those two gold mines glimmering in the sky. So the way to give it feature "weight" would be to give it feature special effects, right? That's what science fiction is all about, right? Light show extravaganzas that the kids'll get stoned to trip at over and over again.

Once again, a script was being bent and shaped around special effects. Only in this case the problem was that the effects weren't working as planned, and they had to keep rewriting as the visuals of what they were writing kept changing.

Seems a little ass backward, doesn't it?

Both *Star Trek* and *The Black Hole* were so obsessed with expensive special effects and gimmicks, that they kept rewriting the scripts around them in tag teams. In the case of *Star Trek*, because they weren't working, and in the case of *The Black Hole*, because the film had been conceived, for openers, as a showcase for the Disney special effects shop. The result, in the case of *Star Trek*, is that somewhere along the line all the story logic and connections evaporated as it was passed back and forth among the elves. There *was* a story there at some point, as witness the novelization, which Roddenberry wrote all by himself. The result, in the case of *The Black Hole*, is gibberish because there was never a coherent story to begin with.

Both of these films fail not despite their wondrous special effects but because of them. This is not necessarily to fault the special effects people on either film, although that would not be very difficult. In both cases, the problem was that there was no single creative intelligence in charge of the film, in lieu of which the special effects themselves became the dominant element

The Black Hole was very much a *Disney* film. Produced by the corporation as a showcase for its craft, it is, in a way, almost an institutional commercial. *Star Trek* obviously should've been Gene Roddenberry's film, but such a measure of control for Gene would occur over Paramount's dead body. Robert Wise was brought in to counterbalance Roddenberry's natural authority, and full script control passed to the gnomes of Zurich.

Cinematically, a special-effects-dependent movie presents certain problems even with a gilt-edged script incised in stone. The actors have to react to things they can't see. Indeed, since many of the special effects are shot later and go through changes, they can be seen to be reacting to something other than even the final concept. Even the director doesn't see the whole picture while he's directing. And with *zillions* of dollars at stake in the special effects budget, he isn't going to be in control of the final special effects either.

Unless there is someone who has the whole thing either on paper or in his head at the outset, and unless that someone is the final creative authority on the project, the whole thing will be out of control from the first day of shooting to the final cut.

There must be someone who understands that special effects are used to tell a story, that a story is not something designed to display special effects. A script that tells a story must be finalized before shooting begins, and the director must be instructed to stick to it in the full confidence that the special effects wizards will be told to do likewise. Only in this way can all the out-of-sequence footage shot by two different crews, under, in effect, two different "directors," be assembled into the final piece of work according to the specs of the script. Anything else will turn out to be a film by nobody.

But when "science fiction cinema" is conceived as a string of astronomical travelogues, space battles, giant funky starships,

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evil robot warriors, and zonks for acid trips, then you get something even worse: a kind of SF porn with high-budget robot penetration shots (see how Vincent sticks it to Maximillian in *The Black Hole*), a meaningless display of the kind of images the studio believes "SF fans" like.

The Black Hole was conceived as such from the word go, and its failure as a film evokes no sense of tragedy, since there was nothing heroic in its ambitions in the first place. It is simply an insult to the intelligence.

But the failure of *Star Trek* surely can be counted as a tragedy that does wound the spirit. There was a great cheer for Roddenberry's credit at the press screening I attended (and a loud "boo" for Paramount's). Hokey as it was, unreal as it may seem, and badly screwed-up though the scale of the effects was, there was a triumphant thrill even for the sophisticates on first glimpse of the chopped and chromed reincarnation of the *Enterprise* hanging in drydock, reborn against all precedent and all odds after a decade or more of the Hollywood Wars. It was a moment of history in a transcinematic sense, a triumph of the optimistic spirit of the people over the mean old powers that be.

Too bad it could not have been a creative triumph as well, something worthy of the act of popular will that brought it into being. Roddenberry's vindication, and his gift to the people who helped make it possible. Whether he could've brought it off or not, we'll never know. They never really let him try.

SF by Steve Brown

continued from page 6

anything that conflicts with the prepackaged opinions they have acquired from the image media (TV and movies). The Hollywood cashmeisters (dollar signs dancing in their cerebral cortices) have obligingly come up with the lowest common denominator theory of popular entertainment: it is only worth producing (i.e., profitable) if it appeals to the largest of audiences. This attitude has created Peter Frampton in music, angel dust in dope, and the current wave of big budget SF movies. Thus we have the childish wish fulfillment fantasies of *Star Wars*, with its blind ignorance of any SF written since the late twenties; the dull sophomoric posturings of *Star Trek*; the wide-eyed pseudoprofundities of *Close Encounters*, etc. (it is *not* enough to merely state that They are Out There; the only important question is how are We and They to interact); the stupid Disney/Christian theologizing of *The Black Hole*. Even *2001*, Stanley Kubrick's masterwork, ultimately falls apart into inanely murky ambiguity that undercuts the film's powerful first half. All of these movies, dredged from the same sump that gave us all those Grade Z monster and flying saucer flicks of the fifties (just splash on a lot of expensive special effects cologne to hide the stench), continue the American tradition of presenting SF to the masses as *inherently* escapist trivia. Thus, in a time of an "SF boom," when public attention is focused on the genre to an unprecedented degree, all of the attention is on the flash of the TNT stick, not on the wave of sound that can make your bones sing, or the power of the explosion itself, which can rock your preconceptions of the universe right off their foundations.

Frederick Pohl is an SF writer who, in the best of all possible worlds, should need as little introduction as, say, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Pohl has been a major influence on SF for forty years. In his fascinating autobiography, *The Way the Future Was*, he charts both his life and the growth of SF (the two are inextricable) into, in the words of Algis Budrys, "a literature in transition towards literature." To anyone curious about the field, this book is required reading. At one point, over half of all SF being published, and most of the good stuff, was being published as a direct result of Pohl's efforts.

Pohl's own writing has always seemed to me to be competent, and usually conceptually interesting, but pedestrian in execution. I except here his collaborations with Cyril Kornbluth, a brilliant writer whose untimely death in 1958 left a vast potential partially fulfilled; in particular, their slashing satire of the advertising business, *Gravy Planet* (better, and less interestingly, known as *Space Merchants*). But Pohl has spent decades polishing his prose, deepening his insights, and becoming better acquainted with his characters.

A few years back, Pohl wrote a short story called "The Gold at Starbow's End." While its concept was both elitist and specious, the story also showed a new supple grace of prose and maturity. My antennae began to quiver, and I began to read him seriously again. Since then he has written a series of novels reflecting a writer in the full flush of his literary maturity, joyfully writing up a storm. These books have been far from perfect, notably in the plotting, Pohl's main weakness. But each of them, from *Man-Plus* to *Gateway* to *Jem*, has shown a steady improvement. The SF community at large accepted the new Pohl by giving *Gateway* both the Hugo and the Nebula awards for best novel of the year, and by buying the book in rarely precedented numbers.

Let's digress for a moment to consider the case of one of today's best rockers—Bruce Springsteen. On Springsteen's most recent album, there is a song called "Prove It All Night." This is an average rocker with average lyrics and predictable hooks. It is the weakest song on the album. Naturally, this was the tune picked by Columbia Records to be the single that would herald the coming of the album. It made a minor splash on the charts and died. But by then it was the song that represented the 1978 Springsteen album to those who had yet to listen to it. Springsteen, instead of quietly burying the song in his repertoire, defiantly reworked the tune into a triumphant anthem in his live concerts. It is now one of his major showstoppers.

Fred Pohl has done something similar with *Beyond the Blue Event Horizon*, the glorious sequel to *Gateway*. *Gateway* was marred for

continued on page 83

THE ADVENTURES OF PROFESSOR THINTWHISTLE AND HIS INCREDIBLE AETHER FLYER

CHAPTER THREE: LAND HO!

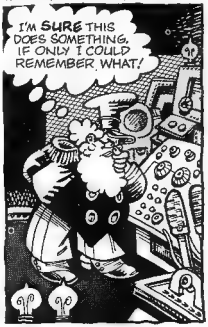
DICK LUPOFF

STEVE STILES

WELL, DEAR READER, IN OUR LAST CHAPTER HER MAJESTY'S FIRST LEFTENANT OSWALD BLITHERING-SNIPE AND HIS ILL-MATCHED MINIONS OF THE DOOM ASTEROID HAD PASSED FROM THIS PHYSICAL PLANE! SO MUCH FOR OUR RECAP! ON WITH THE STORY!
THE LEARNED PHILMUS HIMSELF STATES...
OH, IBID!
GO ON, FOOLS! LORD IT UP WHILE YOU CAN! BLITHERING-SNIPE AND HIS DECADENT CLIQUE OF RUNNING DOGS GOT THEIRS! AND SOON...
READER! WHAT TREACHERY IS THIS?

WHAT STRANGE AND PERVERSE SENSE OF DISLOYALTY SENDS THE BLACKAMOORS SIMPLE INTELLECT DOWN SUCH A PATH?

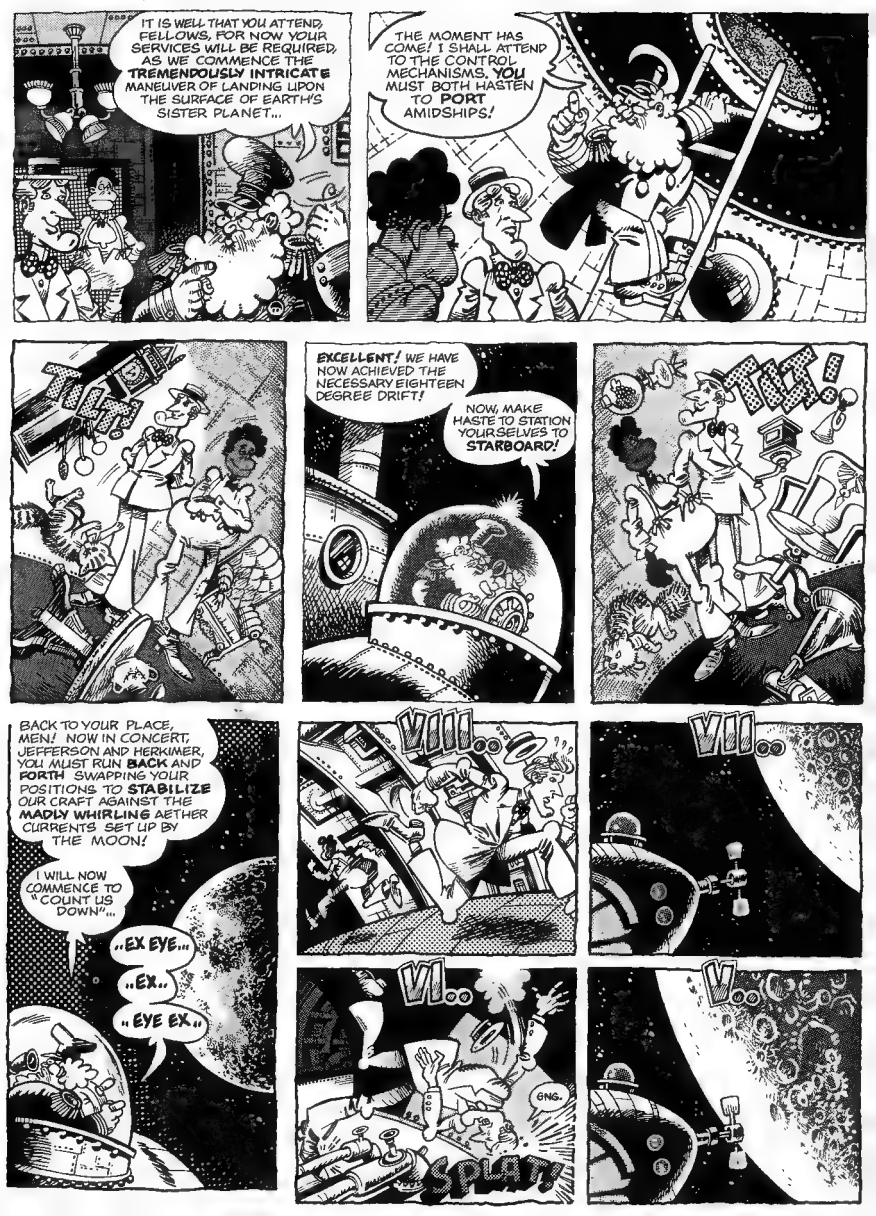
LET US SKIP AHEAD IN TIME, PASSING OVER DAYS OF SHIPBOARD ROUTINE. UPON THE CAPTAIN'S VERANDA WE FIND THEOBALD URIAH THINTWHISTLE SEDULOUSLY EXAMINING A VARIETY OF COMPLEX KNOBS, VALVES, CONTROLS, SWITCHES...



AT THE REAR OF THE CAPTAIN'S VERANDA CAN BE SEEN THE WILY JEFFERSON JACKSON CLAY, HEFTING A BROOM IN HIS CUSTOMARY LACKADAISICAL MANNER. FROM HIS LIPS THERE RISES A SIMPLE TUNE, SYNCOPATED IN THE NATURAL RHYTHM WITH WHICH A JUST NATURE COMPENSATES LESSER RACES...

AND BENEATH THE INNOCENT ORBS OF HERKIMER THERE PASSES LEWD ROTOGRAVURES, PORTRAITS OF "LADIES" () IN IMMODEST STATES OF DISROBEMENT! BLAME NOT THE LAD; BLAME INSTEAD THE EXPLOITERS OF YOUTH FOR PUBLISHING PICTURES WITH SUCH TITLES AS "A BRACE OF HEART BREAKERS," OR "WHY THE SCARECROW RAN AWAY FROM THE FARM!"

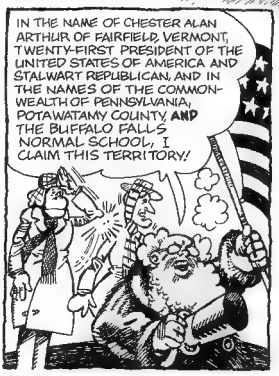
POP!
TOO FAT?
?
PROFESSOR! PROFESSOR! I BELIEVE WE ARE APPROACHING A CELESTIAL BODY!
!
?
OOOH
WHAT CAN IT BE?
YES, HERKIMER DEAR, FOR ONCE IN YOUR IDIOTIC LIFE, YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT...
MY BOY, THE OBJECT WHICH WE NOW BEHOLD IN THE BLACKNESS OF THE CELESTIAL AETHER IS NONE OTHER THAN DEAR MOTHER EARTH'S MENSTRUAL COMPANION, THAT COLD ORB SACRED TO DIANA THE HUNTRESS!
MY BOY, 'TIS NONE OTHER THAN THE MOON!
I WILL NOW SUMMON JEFFERSON JACKSON CLAY! WE MAKE READY FOR OUR DESCENT!
HUZZAH!
OH JEFFERSON!
ZOK!


IT IS WELL THAT YOU ATTEND, FELLOWS, FOR NOW YOUR SERVICES WILL BE REQUIRED, AS WE COMMENCE THE TREMENDOUSLY INTRICATE MANEUVER OF LANDING UPON THE SURFACE OF EARTH'S SISTER PLANET...
THE MOMENT HAS COME! I SHALL ATTEND TO THE CONTROL MECHANISMS, YOU MUST BOTH HASTEN TO PORT AMIDSHIPS!
EXCELLENT! WE HAVE NOW ACHIEVED THE NECESSARY EIGHTEEN DEGREE DRIFT!
NOW, MAKE HASTE TO STATION YOURSELVES TO STARBOARD!
TUT!
BACK TO YOUR PLACE, MEN! NOW IN CONCERT, JEFFERSON AND HERKIMER, YOU MUST RUN BACK AND FORTH SWAPPING YOUR POSITIONS TO STABILIZE OUR CRAFT AGAINST THE MADLY WHIRLING AETHER CURRENTS SET UP BY THE MOON!
I WILL NOW COMMENCE TO "COUNT US DOWN"...
"EX EYE..."
"EX..."
"EYE EX."
VIII...
VII...
VI...
GNG.
SPLAT!
V...

EYE VEE..
EYE EYE EYE
..EYE EYE..
WHUP!
..EYE..
NAUGHT!
AT LAST THE EPIC JOURNEY COMPLETED!
WE ARE HERE!
THUD!
WELL, LADS, LET'S TO IT!
AS I HAVE INSTRUCTED YOU, THE LUNAR ATMOSPHERE IS A THIN AND FRIGID ONE--WERE WE TO SET FOOT UPON HER SURFACE WEARING MERELY OUR ACCUSTOMED STREET DRESS, WE WOULD QUICKLY COME TO REGRET OUR FOOLHARDINESS...
...RETURNING TO BUFFALO FALLS WITH THE SNIFFLES TO SHOW FOR OUR TRIP!
JEFFERSON! BRING FORTH "OLD GLORY," FOR I MAKE READY TO DRAW BACK THE LATCH-CHAIN AND OPEN THE DOOR!

As the door swung open "Old Tut" peered out, the *Chester Alan Arthur* was at rest upon a moundlike outcropping of some dark **PINK** lunar substance.

With agility surprising for one of his advanced years, the Professor leapt the short distance to the strangely **PINK** lunar surface. Herkimer followed, as finally did Jefferson Jackson Clay, the latter inadvertently uttering the **FIRST WORDS** ever spoken by Earthmen upon the surface of the **MOON**...

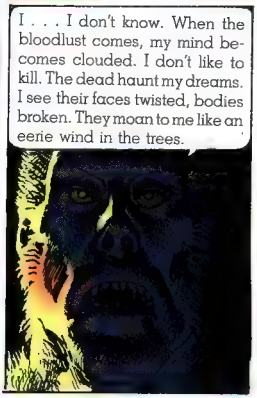

IN THE NAME OF CHESTER ALAN ARTHUR OF FAIRFIELD, VERMONT, TWENTY-FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND STALWART REPUBLICAN, AND IN THE NAMES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, POTAWATAMY COUNTY, **AND** THE BLUFFALO FALLS NORMAL SCHOOL, I CLAIM THIS TERRITORY!

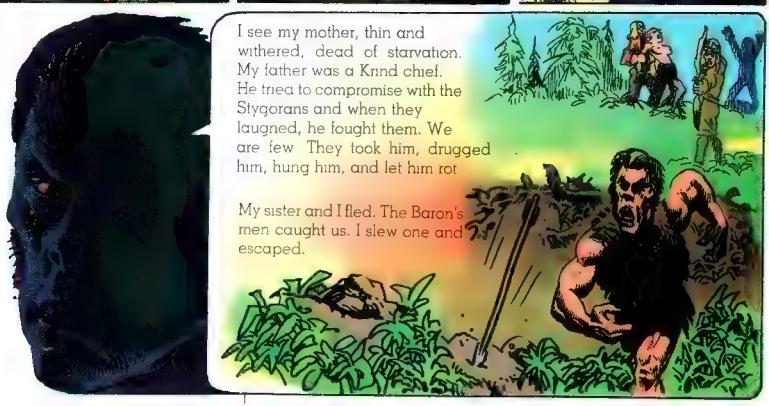
So saying, the savant plunged his metal flagstaff in the pink surface upon which they stood...

Suddenly, a great voice **RANG OUT!** It filled the ears of the three lunar Argonauts, rebounded against the *Arthur* and reverberated off distant hills and rock walls.

FOR BEHOLD, READER, THE INTREPID LITTLE CHESTER ALAN ARTHUR HAD MADE GROUND UPON THE MOON FAIRLY ENOUGH -- BUT NOT UPON THE PUMICEY ROCKS THAT MAKE UP THE LUNAR SURFACE ITSELF...
GRRRR!
?!
NAY, THOUGH DELICACY BE OFFENDED, ACCURACY OF REPORTAGE MUST NEEDS TAKE PRIORITY AS WE SEE THAT THE PLUCKY AETHER CRAFT RESTED PRECARIOUSLY UPON THE LACTEAL FAUCET OF A GIANT WOMAN...
...TO WHOM THE ARTHUR AND HER CREW WERE NO GREATER THAN WOULD BE A BUMBLE BEE AND THREE GNATS TO AN AVERAGE-SIZED EARTHLY PERSON!
...WHAT PEST IS THIS THAT DARES DISTURB THE COMFORT OF SELENA, QUEEN OF THE MOON?
EVERYBODY BACK IN THE SHIP, NOW.
B-BUT, BUT (CHOKE!) WE JUST GOT HERE, PROFESSOR! MUST WE LEAVE SO PRECIPITOUSLY?
GET..
..IN..
..THE..
SHIP.
TO BE CONTINUED!

© 1972, 1979 Richard Corben


I . . . I don't know. When the bloodlust comes, my mind becomes clouded. I don't like to kill. The dead haunt my dreams. I see their faces twisted, bodies broken. They moan to me like an eerie wind in the trees.


I see my mother, thin and withered, dead of starvation. My father was a Krind chief. He tried to compromise with the Stygorans and when they laugned, he fought them. We are few They took him, drugged him, hung him, and let him rot
My sister and I fled. The Baron's men caught us. I slew one and escaped.

"I went to the Krind's sacred place, where our Gods live, to ask guidance of the priest."

The Knnd are lost, my son. DROGIM, the moon avenger, is outraged. He wishes you to be his instrument. He wishes to possess your body and soul. If you accept DROGIM, together you can destroy the Stygorans.

Let it be!

If the Knnd are lost, let it be!

Beware! His form will be imprinted upon you. He'll stay with you until death!

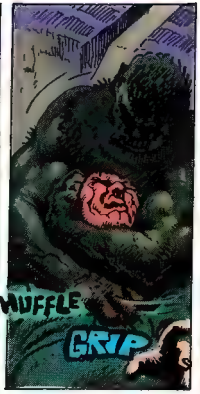
" The priest gave me a potion, spoke many strange things, and a spell was created "

It is done! Remember, Drogim may only be expelled from your body through the willing love of a beautiful woman, which is improbable. Begone now and don't return. I go to see your father.

"I can only guess that the priest's death was a necessary part of the ritual, or that he did not wish to see what surely must come to pass."

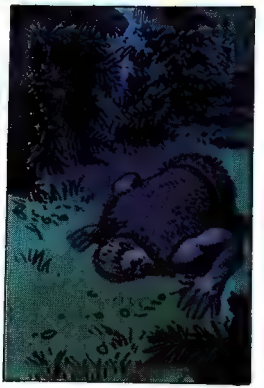
"I returned to Wulv to rescue my sister, too late. Then began the feast of death. "

That fungous fool in the castle is the archenemy. He thinks he is safe behind those thick Stygoran walls. Wulv has many entrances and Wolfton is built on Wulv
Nyaaaaa! Ha, ha, ha!
Prepare your men! All of them. It is time for extravagant action. The beast has taken Lady Chabita from these walls. Tomorrow, I shall lead you myself! **BEGONE!**
'sa goddamned shame! 'should've never come to this forsaken land.
THUD
Clumsy oaf!



Hesitating a moment, the creature wondered whether to keep the relic

It turned and threw the head out the window. Soon the beast was traveling on the road back to the country house. It stopped and listened. The sound of many hoof-beats came to him.



HYAAW! HYAAW!

Sir Hornib saw the barrier in time to halt. The squire and soldier didn't.

Eh?

AUWG

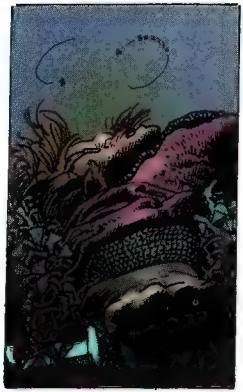
CRASH

What in **HELL?**

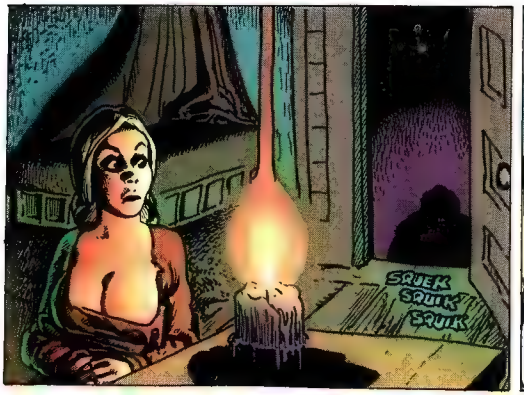
KRAK

Are you the lady's husband?

Sir Hornib lost consciousness for a few moments. His face was numb. His mouth was full of blood and broken teeth. He could only move his tongue and something was wrong with the bones of his face. He was alone. He died.

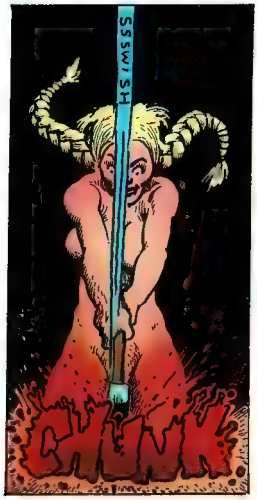


Chabita looked around the house for a weapon. She found the soldier's ax and carried it to the upstairs room. If the beast returned, she had a plan.

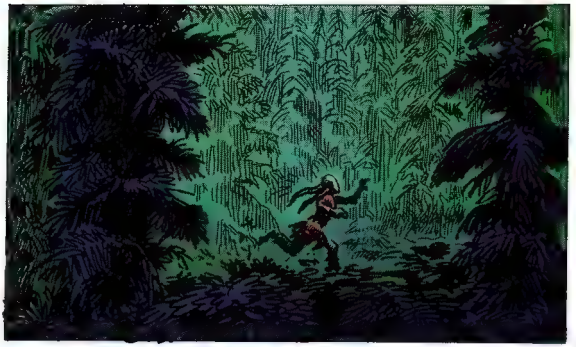


I thought you would leave. I didn't kill your husband. I'll take you to him if you wish.
Don't talk now. I grieve for your own losses. I know your desperation drove you to violence.

Ouw! mmmm, slowly my love. (ungh) deeper, aaaahh!
RRAUGHAAH AH AH AH
AAAH!
I feel a great relief
Drogin has left me
It is good!



Something malignant overcame Lady Chabita. A foul dread, a fear from the pit of her hips. Frantically, she dressed and ran into the dark abysmal forest.

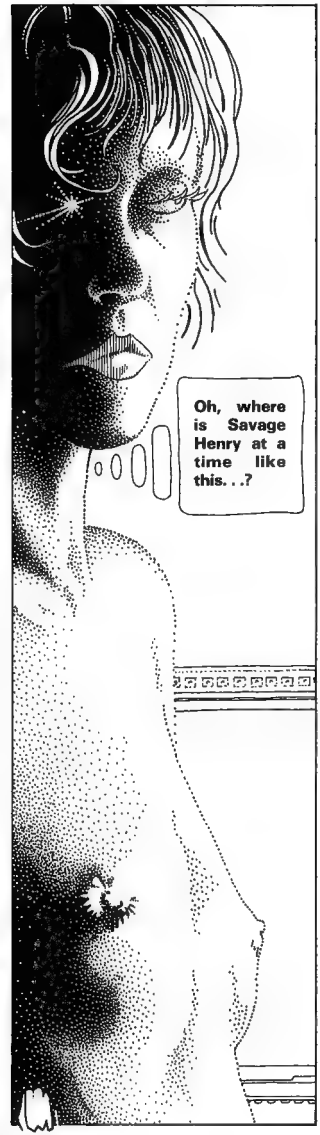


She was found a couple of days later, alive but utterly insane Because of her noble hentage she was cared for in a convent of nuns. There she gave birth to a very strange child.

THE END

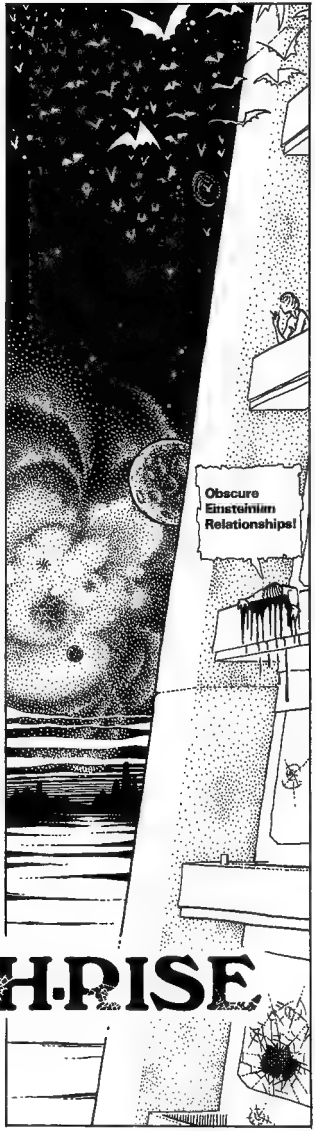
Changes

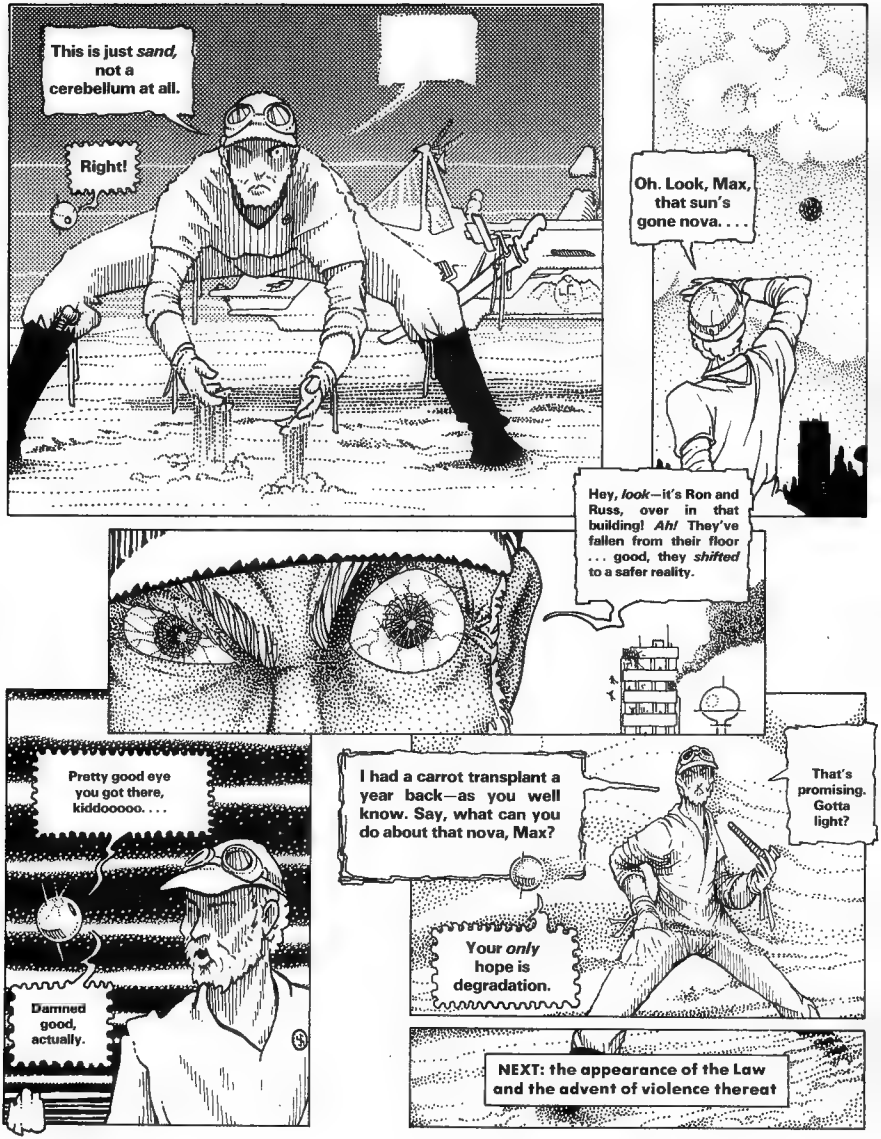
Matt Howarth



If you think justice has come Savage Henry's way . . . you'd be lying sadly to yourself and you'd know it. His current fate is no more than a nuisance, and hardly even that with a carload of "weed" and Max to talk with.

Perhaps if *you* were in Henry's sleek ebony boots, you'd lose your meal in a sudden burst through some orifice, instead of sifting shifty looks across your face and searching the sand for DNA. But . . . this is how *he* spends his exile.




This is just *sand*, not a cerebellum at all.
Right!
Oh. Look, Max, that sun's gone nova. . . .
Hey, *look*—it's Ron and Russ, over in that building! *Ah!* They've fallen from their floor . . . good, they *shifted* to a safer reality.
Pretty good eye you got there, kiddooooo. . . .
Damned good, actually.
I had a carrot transplant a year back—as you well know. Say, what can you do about that nova, Max?
That's promising. Gotta light?
Your *only* hope is degradation.
NEXT: the appearance of the Law and the advent of violence thereat

Seems to be a pretty mundane reality. . . .
THIS MORNING
We've remained unchanged *so far.* I wonder—ooch!
City over there, maybe a place to eat. .
mmmm
YESTERDAY'S MORNING
Our first concern should be *Boche,* that bastard cosmic doctor! He's not gonna get—
Don't worry—his death is as imminent as my killing him in the bloodiest manner I can think of.
I doubt it. . . .
You already have one count of murder against you. Don't push your luck!
Great! It's the Caped Guano!
Oh damn!

Don't do anything *rash*, Post! I'm prepared to deal with scum like you, as I have with *hundreds* of others.
NO!
You bully! He's the only person we're gonna meet who *might* understand our dilemma!
?
Bully? Me? You *ninny*—he's out to stick us in the electric chair and you talk about our *"dilemma"*!
huh
Oooop!
I don't know who you're trying to fool. . . .
You could be right, he seems to be most irrational.
Oh!
. . . not me
Eeyahh—look out! Time *for* some N_2O!
Ack!

Now . . . LAY OFF, you pissant hysteric!!!
. . . right to the bottom . . . I think you broke his neck or somethin'.
Come on, dammit! We have enough problems as it is, and I'm hungry now. . . .
You didn't have to kill him!
Lay off, Russ.
You're beginning to sound like *he* did. . . .
NEXT: the celluloid reels of Cosmic Doorways

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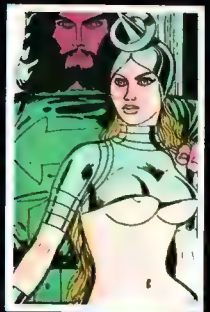

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REMEMBER WHEN DAY-DREAMS AND FANTASIES WERE YOUR LAST PRIVATE REFUGE? THAT, OF COURSE, WAS BEFORE... THE DREAM POLICE!
THIS IS BILL GRUBER, HE'S NEW ON THE FORCE.
HI KID.
I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU SIR, YOU'RE "ICE PACK" PEMBERTON, YOU'VE GOT THE LIBRARY BEAT.
HE SURE HAS, GRUBER, THE TIMES SQUARE OF DREAMLAND.
AH! IT'S JUST A MOB OF TWO BIT FANTASIES... MOSTLY LEGIT. IF THERE'S AN OFFENDER, WE SPOT HIM EASY ENOUGH
YOU BUST ANY GOOD ONES LATELY, ICE PACK?
THERE ARE NO GOOD ONES, KID. IMAGINATIVE, MAYBE... BUT MOSTLY THE SAME SORDID TITS AND ASS.
I TELL YA, I BUSTED A HONEY TODAY...
THE GUY WAS ABOUT AN INCH TALL AN' HE WAS SITTIN' ON... WHAT'S THAT MODELS NAME, CHERYL SOMETHIN'?
ANYWAY SHE WAS STARK STARIN' NAKED, O'COURSE AN' HE WAS SITTIN' ON HER BOOB.

MUZICK by Lou Stathis

continued from page 7

er (our perception of time warped by a sort of McLuhan-Heisenberg-Einstein effect), it comes as no surprise that quite a lot should have happened in that time. Indeed it has. Part of it was the deluge of electronic rok that slipped in the door along with 1979, a group of craftily infectious bastards that immediately set about fastening themselves to my ears (like those pesky advertising drones in Philip Dick novels). Dozens of the things, mostly singles on obscure labels, have come into my possession over the past several months, and the air molecules in my miserably high-numbered conapt have been doggedly vibrating ever since with the sounds of pulsing electric rhythms and various melodic beeps and snorts. Great stuff. May I have the next spastic twitch?

Of course, it's easy for anal regressives such as myself to trace the roots and antecedents of electrorok. I know they're there 'cause I've been listening to them for years. The list covers much the same group of demented krauts and limeys I went through last month, with the addition of Ultravox themselves, who best crystallized the muzickal and conceptual elements of seventies decadent futurism. But the key here is that rok has finally built for itself a history, a fertile tradition from which any number of characters can choose the elements they wish to work with to make muzick relevant to their immediate needs. That's why an area as seemingly narrow as the interface of New Wave and electronix can be so alive with such diverse sensibilities as those of Gary Numan, the Flying Lizards, the Human League, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, Mi-Sex, Plastics, Cabaret Voltaire, and shit knows how many others I have yet to stumble across.

To keep this column nice and linear, the way historians and burned-out rok writers like it, I'll continue last month's thread, the Ultravox connection. Clasped in my three-fingered hand is one of the first vinyl releases of 1980, a single by John Foxx, whom you Neanderthals might remember as Ultravox's former vocalist. Foxx has formed his own label, Metal Beat, distributed by UK Virgin. According to the British press, Metal Beat is intended for both Foxx's own releases (an upcoming album called *Metamatic*, if you believe press releases, or *Fusion/Fission*, if you believe Virgin's ad on the back of *Sounds*, 22 December 1979) as well as "one-off" deals with other artists (a Stiff-pioneered arrangement where agreements are only from one work to the next). I sincerely doubt any of this stuff will be released domestically, so you should definitely snap these imports up as soon as you see them. I've only had Foxx's single for a couple of days and haven't yet had much of a chance to digest it.

On first playing I was disappointed. It is less aurally hospitable than Ultravox, less immediately hooking. It warms with more playing, though. "Underpass," the A side, opens almost dirgelike: you hear a fade-in of synthesized Doppler-shifted engine noise and then a slow bass pulse. This sound is joined one at a time by three more synthesized rhythm and melody tracks, all playing at each other without much apparent connection, forming by implication the song's physical boundaries. It has an otherworldly nonreality to it, that pulled apart and creatively misassembled sound that the Residents characterize in a more extreme fashion. The song climaxes after the third verse with the entry of a sweeping Klaus Schulze-like synthi phrase buttressing Foxx's shouted refrain "Underpass," and then carries us to a rather majestic conclusion. Foxx's voice, treated slightly and chilled by the addition of an intentionally flat backing vocal, is unmistakable. His coolness and subtlety of nuance are both intact, and perhaps the slightest bit more controlled. The lyrics are also familiar in design; obscure notebook extracts from the pen of a dislocated solipsist.

> Standing in the dark
> Watching you glow
> Lifting a receiver
> Nobody I know.
> Underpass.
> Underpass.
> Over all the bridges
> Echoes in rows
> Talking at the same time
> Click, click, drone . . .

The flip, "Film One," is an instrumental. Like "Underpass" it is all synthetic and, I suspect, a one-man operation (the only non-

Foxx credit on the record is for engineer Gareth Jones). The tempo again is slow, lurching almost, in its discontinuity. It is a minimalist montage of sounds, a vinyl cohabitation of synthetic textures, barely held together by a basic repeating melody line. There is perking coffee percussion (kinda like a noxious old number called "Popcorn" by Hot Butter, a rough rock-scraping-sidewalk sound, a bass thump, a high-pitched reedy echo, a foghorn, some Frippian skysaw, a few clinking glasses, and a deep distorted gong. Doesn't really go anywhere, but it's a good experiment (I'm a sucker for off-the-wall B sides) and certainly fun to listen to.

Foxx's solo muzick comes in a traceable progression from Ultravox's *Systems of Romance*, specifically from the songs "Dislocation" and "Just for a Moment." He has moved into a quirkier, more self-involved territory, one that is probably less accessible to those who preferred the group's rokkier side. This is no real surprise considering the inferences one might make about Foxx's muzickal personality and the parameters he chooses to work within. I am left, however, with a distinctly tantalized feeling. There is enough here to stir my imagination (and partially satisfy the curiosity in my gut) but not enough to really tell me anything concrete. I don't know what I expect, though I do sense that Foxx could potentially emerge as a figure of major importance (somewhere between Bowie and Eno on the old stature scale). I suppose I want something tangible that I can point to and say (with my usual self-satisfied smirk), "This is hot stuff, Jocko, and it is certain to change the course of Western civilization." I guess I gotta wait longer for something like that (gimme, gimme). Perhaps next month, when the album comes in.

While Foxx has been busy industrializing himself, his former Ultravox mates have not exactly been idle. Besides a grueling three-month tour of the States, and reportedly having a long-player of material waiting for the right label deal, a couple of the boys have provided support for a single released under the name Visage (on Radar Records, a label recently swallowed whole by Warner). Visage, I would guess, consists solely of vocalist Steve Strange (I wonder if his friends call him Doc?), since the musicians backing him are all on tourist visas from other bands. In addition to Voxers Midge Ure and Billy Currie, we've got Rusty Egan, a former Rich Kid, pounding the skins. Three Magazines are also in there helping out: saxophonist/guitarist John McGeoch, keyboardist Dave Formula (love that name), and bassist Barry Adamson. Quite a lineup. Yowza.

The A side, "Tar," is very much in the Ultravox tradition and more straightforward than Foxx's effort. Strange sings in a mannered heldentenor not unlike Billy Idol of Generation X, and though his voice lacks a sharp cutting edge, it fits in okay, if rather anonymously, with the punchy instrumental backing. The song is about smoking tobacco (foul substance) and features a rousing group-chanted chorus of "Nerves, Nerves, Tension, Tension, Addiction, Addiction, Addiction, Low Tar, High Tar" on top of a smoothly counterpointed synthesizer hook The instrumental verse and coda contrast some straight-from-the-solar-plexus Andy Mackay saxophone by McGeoch with the gargling synthi line (Currie's or Formula's?) that carries most of the tune. It's catchy, exuberant, danceable, churning with the rhythm of Egan's phased high hat, and there's even some dissonant piano tossed in to appease those concerned with avant-gardist credibility. In short, it's great rok 'n' roll, the sort of thing that you know, after the opening synthi burps, will become one of those records you *must* listen to at least once every couple of hours for weeks until you get so damn sick of it you hear it in your sleep, or your neighbors pound on your door and offer you obscene amounts of money to let their Dobermans chew on the fucking record like it was licorice, or anything, just so you'll stop playing it at top volume over and over and over . . . You understand.

Once you've had enough of "Tar," you might be interested to know that you can actually flip the little black disc over and get something just as good by playing the other side! This one is called "Frequency 7," and besides being more synthetic than its siamese

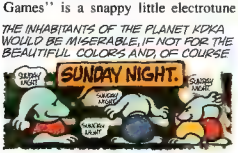
"...IT WAS A GOOD LIKENESS, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT... SO JUST AS HE WAS SLIDIN' HIS HAND UP TO GRAB HER...
HOLD IT FRANK!
FIGHT IT, KID! FIGHT IT!!
C'MON GRUBE THINK OF YOUR MOM!
AAAAAAHH!!
CHOMP!!
YOU'RE GONNA MAKE A GOOD COP KID.
AT A BOY, GRUBE.

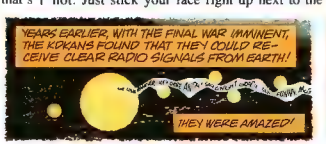
sibling, it's also more demented (yay!). Strange's voice is treated beyond recognition and also beyond by ability to decipher most of what he's singing. The chorus tells us, "Face the futuristic now, You can't stop it anyhow." Whoah, a message! Strange then tells us some of the futuristic stuff we may have trouble dealing with and then rapidly loses his cool all over the place, screaming the key line repeatedly and having his words increasingly distorted by some vicious technological intelligence. Old Steve is obviously suffering from some severe emotional distress. The doctor recommends some serious temporal adjustment therapy or, at the very least, massive jolts of Thorazine administered with six-inch needles through the eyeballs directly into the frontal lobes. That'll straighten the poor boy out. Nasty things these modern times do to people.

From the direct Ultravox lineage we move along to things that reflect their influence and a group that calls itself Mi-Sex (that's the title of the last song on UV album one, side two, for those of you with cerebral inventory shrinkage). These clowns hail from (are you ready for it?) Australia, of all goddamn places. "Pass me that can of Foster's , Bruce, and see if you can raise any bebop on the wireless." Can it really be 1980 down there, too? I guess it is, and "Computer Games" would appear to be proof. This hot platter comes our way from Aussie CBS (it says in big letters all over the place, AN AUSTRALIAN PERFORMANCE, as though that's a rarity and reason for great celebration), and not only is there a single, but an album called *Graffiti Crimes* claims to exist as well (I've yet to see it). "Computer Games" is a snappy little electrotune that's been getting frequent radio play here in Alphaville on WPIX (the best thing to happen to New York City air since Mayor Rupert Murdoch banned internal combustion engines in '86), and it took me a couple of times to realize that Mi-Sex was a *band* and not the song I kept blanking out and missing (I'm slow). A swirling, percussive synthesizer sequence grabs you right away, followed by the main melody line, a simple four-note phrase repeated with two variations played with grandiose reverb romantic sweep. The vocalist is a mildly smoked-voice type who sings the stuttered chorus as though someone is doing nasty things to his balls with a pair of electrodes. "Compu-pu-pu-pu-pu-*PYA!*-pu-*PYA!*-pu-*PYA!* pu-*PYA!*-puter games!" And there's even some snazzy bleeps and honks to keep the robots happy. The B side, "Wot Do You Want," is a more mainstream rok number with a clichéd power-chorded guitar progression and a bit of synthesizer highlighting the chorus. A good enough foot-tapper but nothing to beam down a landing party about.

The successor to Visage as This Week's Most Addicting Single is unquestionably "I Like 'Lectric Motors" by Patrick D. Martin (on UK Deram, a label I thought as long gone as things like the first Procol Harum album). Martin delivers an exhilarating tour de force of technomaniac rok that *demands* to be played at the absolute limit of your amplifier's capability. The mix is sizzling hot. Just stick your face right up next to the speaker and watch your two-week growth of beard disintegrate into little puffs of smoke. The beat is vicious (I dare you to listen to this sitting down) and Martin's hypnotically chanted vocals mix Peter Hammill intensity with Ian Dury inflection. Steadily, Martin adds successive layers of fever-pitched synthetic rhythm patterns until just after the fourth chorus a point just short of rokbeat overload is reached. In a sudden flash of epiphanous certainty you realize you are in extreme danger of losing it *all*, right there on the floor, needing only the slightest push. At that instant, a madman slashes through your speakers with a chainsaw and goes right for your quivering skull. It's all over for you. Through the haze of your death agony you are dimly aware of the soaring, shrieking sounds of a Hendrix/Fripp guitar solo (or is it that madman Martin vacuum-sucking the blood from your body?). Jesus, who knows what's happened to me? "I Like 'Lectric Motors" is pure animal stuff, far better than adrenaline extract spiked into the cortex. This merciless satan beast Martin has contrived a terminally addictive aural drug that compels you to listen to it constantly for days, weeks, whether your feeble body can stand the beating or not. What does he care? Bloodthirsty monster, I can just see his face leering mechanically, metal-toothed and slot-eyed like Palmer Eldritch, laughing jubilantly at my piteous suffering.

Quick, some relief! Something to ease this fiercely pounding pressure in my head, and a Handi-Wipe to take care of the foam on my lips. How about "Copy"/"Robot" by Plastics? Say . . .this is rather good. Soothing, innocuous, pleasing to the ear. It's from Rough Trade in London (one of the original independent label distributors in the UK, and occasionally a label of their own), but the group members appear to be . . .Japs? Jesus. First kangaroos and now inscrutable orien-


THE INHABITANTS OF THE PLANET KOKA WOULD BE MISERABLE, IF NOT FOR THE BEAUTIFUL COLORS AND, OF COURSE
SUNDAY NIGHT.
SUNDAY NIGHT
SUNDAY NIGHT
SUNDAY NIGHT


YEARS EARLIER, WITH THE FINAL WAR IMMINENT, THE KOKANS FOUND THAT THEY COULD RECEIVE CLEAR RADIO SIGNALS FROM EARTH!
THEY WERE AMAZED!

ZOOKS!
by VAUGHN BODE
ESH, HERE IT COME... I CAN HEAR DA GROUND WHISTLING CLOSER!! I DON'T SUPPOSE I'LL HAS DA LUCK TO LAND IN A LAKE OR RIVER OR SOMETHIN' LIKE DAT...
SO, I LANDS IN A BROKEN DOWN, DRIED UP CREEK BED! NICE GOIN' BODE... OOOH... I GOT A AWFUL LOT OF BROKEN BONES AN STUFF!
BONG
THUMP
BASH
©1980 VAUGHN BODE

tals are infiltrating the sacred ground. When will it end? The songs do have an airy, irrepressible, pop-Kraftwerk feel, with bouncing rubberized rhythms and a tinkling-crystal synthi melody. The vocals (in English, thank God, though cutely accented) remind me of a New York band, the Model Citizens, in the way the lead male and female voices (Toshi and Chica, respectively) work in tandem. There's also a bit of Talking Head David Byrne in there and some Enostyle yelping. There's even a line in "Copy" where old Toshi whines "nineninenineninenine..." just like everybody's favorite oblique strategist does on "King's Lead Hat." Diabolically derivative, these singing sonymen, but not without some resource. The lyrics are clever plays with words and abbreviations ("Robot" is almost entirely corporate acronyms) and the sleeve and label graphics are exemplary (done by the band). Definitely worth acquiring.

To complete this needed descent into total soporification, I reach for "Touch"/"Love on the Ganges" by Lori & the Chameleons. Now *this* is relaxation. Safe, dependable disco beat, whispered little-girl vocals on "Touch" (telling us all about her obsoexciting trip to Japan), single-hook minimalist Kraftwerk arrangements, and murmuring wind chime backing voices. I'm breathing easier already. This little honey was originally released on the Zoo label (a Liverpool asylum for such endearingly loony outfits as the Teardrop Explodes, Echo & the Bunnymen, and the Expelaires). I suspect it was done as a bit of a lark. When it became a modest hit in the British charts, it was picked up and rereleased by UK Sire, who added a picture on the sleeve of someone I'm supposed to believe is "Lori" — a perky, mini skirted mod-ette. What year did you say this was?

That's it for me. My bones have jellied to the point where they can't support my body in an upright position any longer. Roll in the stretcher, boys. Next month I will *really* get down to it and put myself on the line. Pitted against my puny strength will be the real *grim* stuff, the warped, darker side of the technorok juggernaut. Stand back for Suicide, Throbbing Gristle, the Normal, and the rest of what I've humbly dubbed the Sine Wave. (Get it? Jesus, I'm clever.)

SF by Steve Brown

continued from page 58

me by endless, tedious psychoanalytic sections and an infuriating ending, though the writing itself was beautiful. It's almost too bad that the book went on to win awards and sell so well. In that best of all possible worlds mentioned earlier, *Gateway* would have had the psychoanalysis cut to a tenth of its present length and the remaining novella grafted onto the front of *Event Horizon*.

For those unfamiliar with it, *Gateway* concerns the discovery of alien artifacts littering the solar system, relics of a race known as the Heechee, who haven't been in the neighborhood for half a million years. The major Heechee find was a large base with several hundred small ships in operational order. The ships had preprogrammed destinations and came equipped with an FTL drive. A human riding a Heechee ship had a certain probability of returning empty-handed, a lesser probability of not coming back at all, and a much smaller chance of returning with a new Heechee artifact that could be reproduced and used, making its discoverer wealthy. Entrepreneurs quickly turned the Heechee base into a kind of large-scale crapshoot. This idea as a basis for a plot has always bothered me. The parameters of the narrative are far too rigid. The reader knows too much about the options open to the characters, and their chances of success or failure.

Beyond the Blue Event Horizon begins about twenty years after the end of *Gateway*. Robin Broadhead, *Gateway*'s overanalyzed protagonist, is the head of a large conglomerate and disgustingly wealthy. A new Heechee artifact, a big one, is detected out in the cometary halo. It turns out to be something Earth needs very badly, a food factory, a gigantic machine that converts the raw material of comets into CHON food (carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, the basic construction materials for life). A crew is selected, a ship outfitted, and an expedition launched. The book begins four years into the journey of this expedition, roughly about the time they arrive.

The Heechee artifacts represent a basic SF archetype that has yet to lose its power to fascinate: the Enigmatic Alien. The contemplation of alien intelligence is a theme virtually unique to SF, and a compelling one for anyone with curiosity. Pohl's handling of the theme lies in showing a frustrated humanity trying to piece together a picture of an entire race by the junk they left behind. Imagine an Australian aborigine, turned loose inside a store specializing in component stereo systems, attempting to figure out the purpose of those strangely complex heavy cubes. Almost every SF writer has tried his or her hand at this kind of story (*2001* is the best-known popular example). Pohl has created an Enigmatic Alien in his Heechee that is the most satisfying I have ever encountered. He doesn't just toss out an inexplicable object for mystification's sake. Everything left by the Heechee has a definite purpose, perhaps one that would take humans years to figure out, but a purpose nonetheless. In the course of the two books, Pohl builds the beginnings of an understanding of the Heechee, and gives just enough, without devolving into mere rote explanation.

Pohl has fleshed out the future human civilization in great detail with seemingly effortless minimal touches. There is a danger in this unique to SF. In contemporary fiction, the various props in the story are assumed to be understood by the reader. It isn't necessary to say anything more than: "He hailed a cab and arrived at the airport just minutes after his flight had left." We all know what each of those words mean. In an SF story, one cannot simply state: "He grew a bubble and adjusted it to the coordinates of the nearest equatorial substation, arriving just minutes after his translation window had closed." This need for explanation gives SF a tendency to be top-heavy with description —speed bumps in the narrative. The SF writer must be skillful indeed to slip the reader this necessary burden of exposition.

Pohl throws us one new concept after another, and rarely does the narrative bog down or the reader remain *too* puzzled. One charming device of Pohl's, used for important background exposition, is Robin Broadhead's science program—Albert Einstein. Albert is a program that continually monitors most of recorded knowledge, including fast-breaking current events. The

SERGEANT SUNFLOWER, IS YOU OKAY?!
OOOH. I THINK I IS DEAD.
OOH OUCH! OW! DAT HURTS! I JUST KNOWS I GOT 400 BROKEN BONES..
YUCK! WHAT A MESS! WAIT TILL THA' CREW SEE DIS. BETTER BRING A STRECHER...
WELP, IT'S OFF TO A NICE CUSHY HOSPITAL IN THE TROPICS FOR YOU, SERGEANT... ALL THOSE PRETTY GIRLS!!!
OOOOH! THE AGONY OF THINGS... OUCH!..

program then evaluates, extrapolates, and hypothesizes. Albert answers Broadhead's questions from a 3-D "holo tank" in which is depicted a highly realistic, breathing Albert Einstein speaking colloquially, advancing theories, tapping his pipe, and nodding his head. Pohl's skill is perfectly demonstrated in his fine tuning of the "character" of Albert. As engaging a being as Albert is, Pohl never lets him give the appearance of having free will or being anything other than an evaluation program. For example, some dialogue between Broadhead and Albert:

> "Albert," I said, tell me something. You computers are supposed to be lightning-fast. Why is it that you take so long to answer sometimes? Just dramatic effect?"
>
> "Well, Bob, sometimes it is," he said after a moment, "like that time. But I am not sure you understand how difficult it is for me to 'chat.' If you want information about, say, black holes, I have no trouble producing it for you. Six million bits a second, if you like. But to put it in terms you can understand, above all to put it in the form of conversation, involves more than accessing the storage. I have to do word-searches through literature and taped conversations. I have to map analogies and metaphors against your own mind-sets. I have to meet such strictures as are imposed by your defined normatives for my behavior, and by relevance to the tone of the particular chat. Tain't easy, Robin."

Pohl takes a lot of chances with this book. There are two different first person narrators at the beginning, but they both turn into third person objects in the middle, only to have one of them resume narrating near the end. Crucial events and situations are referred to obliquely or happen offstage between chapters. Most of the plot revolves around successive revelations of Heechee technology that could (and sometimes do) negate the characters' motives or render pointless developing situations. The book skips blithely from place to place and scene to scene in a decidedly nonlinear fashion. All of these idiosyncracies, when utilized by a lesser writer, would mean certain death for a book. *Beyond the Blue Event Horizon* is a marvelous Rube Goldberg of a narrative whose ungainly parts whir and mesh in perfect sync.

An example: At one point, Broadhead finds it necessary to take a lengthy journey in a Heechee ship over which he has no control beyond pushing the go button. Right when it dawns on Broadhead that he will soon starve to death (the midpoint of the journey is reached several days late, making his onboard food and water supplies inadequate), the scene changes. Pages later Broadhead shows up, skinny, smelly, but alive, with no explanations. It isn't until much later that he reflects on why he survived the experience. I'd love to know how Pohl gets away with this kind of thing; he not only makes it work, he makes it believable.

Another sign of Pohl's skill is his careful attention to background touches. My favorite example involves a kind of madness that simultaneously affects every human being alive for a few hours every 180 days or so. This has become a planetary catastrophe over the ten or fifteen years it has been going on, a catastrophe where thousands lose their lives in plane crashes, etc. Yet, it is rarely directly mentioned (everyone is affected, so it is unnecessary for the characters to mention it to each other). Pohl slides in just the right line or two to both keep the reader aware of the fever and aware of its universal impact After a bout with the fever, Broadhead goes into a restaurant. The fever is then taken out of the context of being a personal hardship for Broadhead and put into the context of a universal event with one line (in a quarter of the words it took me to say this):

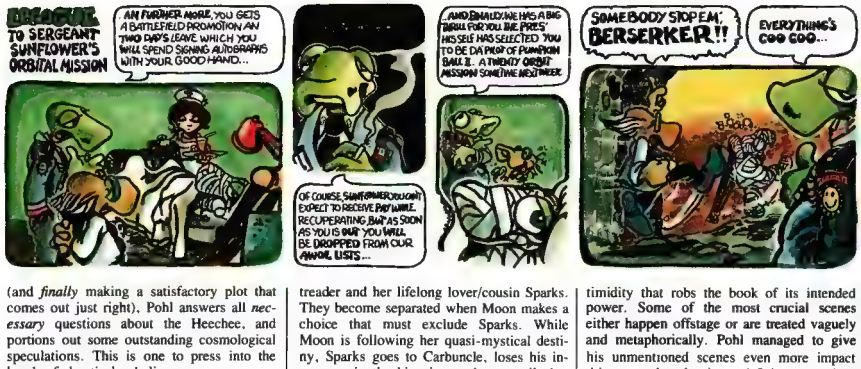
> . . .I couldn't talk to him right away, though, because right then my dinner came up and the waiter was a human being. He wanted to ask me how I had got through the fever, so that he could tell me how he had, and that took time. But at last I sat down in front of the holo tank, sliced into my chicken steak and said, "Go ahead Morton, what's the bad news?"

Pohl's characters are vivid and drawn with high realism. For example, old Payter, leader of the food factory expedition, whose grandiose schemes gradually change into self-inflicted nightmares of megalomania. Then there is the mysterious Wan, raised aboard a Heechee artifact by machines, with no human contact but some stored human intelligences that have long ago gone insane. Here is a taste of Wan's character.

> And what did Wan feel? He seemed so uncomplicated as he showed her about his domain, like one child guiding another through his toy chest. Janinie knew better. If she had learned anything in her fourteen years, it was that nobody was uncomplicated. Wan's complications were merely not the same as her own, as she saw at once when he showed her the water fixture that worked. He had not been able to drink the water, but he had used it for a toilet. Janinie, brought up in the great conspiracy of the Western world to pretend that excretion does not happen, would never have brought Wan to see this place of stains and smells, but he was wholly unembarrassed. She could not even make him embarrassed.

The book is an intricate, beautifully written, and multilayered experience. Wonder is piled on wonder, and the narrative never sags for a moment. I purposely haven't mentioned many specifics about the Heechee artifacts because Pohl's gradual revelations are too much fun for me to spoil them for you. But the most important aspect of the book for me is the impact of Heechee technology on human culture. To use our aborigine friend again, imagine a devastated Sydney, Australia. Aborigine expeditions voyage to the ruins and bring back artifacts. Some of them turn out to be highly useful and significantly raise the aborigine standard of living: compound bows, frying pans, and strike-anywhere matches. Most of the artifacts are interesting but meaningless: TV sets, pocket calculators, or bicycle exercise machines. Some things require years of study by aborigine scientists but ultimately pay off the most: books, agricultural machinery, or complex sailing craft. Other things turn out to be highly destructive and capable of destroying the aborigine society: dynamite, canisters of radium, or vials of cultured viruses. All of these are aspects of the Heechee artifacts found by humans. Pohl carefully integrates them all into the narrative seamlessly, without shrinking from the massive culture shock.

In a final burst of extrapolative brilliance


FROM SERGEANT TO SERGEANT SUNFLOWER'S ORBITAL MISSION
AN FURTHER MORE, YOU GETS A BATTLEFIELD PROMOTION, AN TWO DAY'S LEAVE WHICH YOU WILL SPEND SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS WITH YOUR GOOD HAND...
...AND FINALLY, WE HAS A BIG THRILL FOR YOU, BE, PRES' HIS SELF HAS SELECTED YOU TO BE DA PROP OF PUMPKIN BALL II... A TWENTY ORBIT MISSION SOMETIME NEXT TIMER.
OF COURSE, SUNFLOWER, YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO RECEIVE PAY WHILE RECUPERATING, BUT AS SOON AS YOU IS OUR YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM OUR PAYROLL LISTS...
SOMEBODY STOP 'EM, BERSERKER!!
EVERYTHING'S GOO GOO...

(and *finally* making a satisfactory plot that comes out just right), Pohl answers all *necessary* questions about the Heechee, and portions out some outstanding cosmological speculations. This is one to press into the hands of skeptical unbelievers.

Only one thing still bothers me. Fred, Fred. Did you *have* to use that awful title?

It is a current cliché that the difference between a male SF writer and a female SF writer is the difference between the hard and the soft sciences. Speculations on anthropology, sociology, and psychology have been rare in a field noted for its love affair with hard technology. These soft sciences have been the concern of most of the better women SF writers lately, thus creating a conceptual schism in the field.

Fortunately for my peace of mind (pigeonholing makes me nervous) Joan Vinge blurs this distinction. (See my January column.) In her writing to date, I have found a deep, uncloying romanticism that puts her in the company of such superb SF writers as Ursula LeGuin and Kate Wilhelm. At the same time she demonstrates a rigorous and imaginative grasp of technology.

In her newest novel, *The Snow Queen*, we see an exuberant Vinge, flush with success, trying out her ideas on a grand scale. The book is huge (630 manuscript pages) but filled with constant event and little dead weight. Vinge can write gripping action prose with the best of them—the scene with the airship going down into the sea had me short of breath—and the pace rarely slows.

The novel is set on Tiamat, a planet in a trinary star system that includes two suns and an enormous rotating black hole (20,000 solar masses) known as the Black Gate. The intricate orbital patterns cause unruly climatic changes on Tiamat every hundred years. The planet is inhabited by two cultures, with slight cross-fertilization from off-world technology. The Summers are pastoral low-tech fisherfolk. The Winters are the planet's rulers, who reside mostly in the city of Carbuncle and are personified in the character of Arienrhod, the Snow Queen. The time is coming when another climatic shift will occur; a time when the Summers and Winters ritually exchange roles.

The main thread of the plot is an intricate four-way relationship. There is Moon Dawntreader and her lifelong lover/cousin Sparks. They become separated when Moon makes a choice that must exclude Sparks. While Moon is following her quasi-mystical destiny, Sparks goes to Carbuncle, loses his innocence in the big city, and eventually becomes ensnared in the lives of the Snow Queen (Vinge's epitome of decadent sophistication) and her unpleasant consort, Starbuck. These four characters dance a gavotte of acceptance-rejection and false assumption that keeps the story in constant motion.

There is a lot in this book that is very good. Half of the characters are realistic people (notably Jerusha, the police commander; Herne, the first Starbuck; Tor Starhiker—name aside, my favorite character; and Arienrhod herself). These people are satisfyingly deep and leave the reader with the impression that much more is known about them than is stated in the text. There are many interesting and quirky subplots that advance the main story to a comfortably complete conclusion. A lot of the writing is evocative and effective.

Yet there are also many flaws, most of which seem to come from too little editorial attention.

The book is riddled with inconsistencies. Alongside the good and solid characters, there are many people constructed of the most one-dimensional sort of stereotyping. The worst cases of this are Moon and Sparks, the two most central characters, who move and bend with the exigencies of the plot. It seems to break down by name. The ones with the real names, Jerusha and Arienrhod, for example, are real people, and the ones with Saturday morning TV names (Moon and Sparks) are mere outlines. I found it interesting that Starbuck began as a pure textbook example of stereotyping (distilled evil, in keeping with that awful name) until we are given his *actual* name (Starbuck turns out to be a title), whereupon he takes on solidity and unexpected characteristics.

Another inconsistency is Vinge's descriptive prose. It ranges from a wealth of fascinating detail reminiscent of Jack Vance (the description of entering Carbuncle from the sea), to the vague and perfunctory (the lack of description of the rest of Carbuncle, where the bulk of the novel is set).

Perhaps the aspect of Vinge's writing that most sets my teeth on edge is the basic timidity that robs the book of its intended power. Some of the most crucial scenes either happen offstage or are treated vaguely and metaphorically. Pohl managed to give his unmentioned scenes even more impact this way, but he is a definite exception. Moon's ordeal in passing through the Black Gate, enhanced by her recently awakened semioccult powers of perception, is described with an indistinct subjectivity that is ultimately meaningless, though the scene is central to understanding Moon's future actions and beliefs. The love scene between Sparks and Moon, after they have been separated for five years and have turned into very different people (although in their case it is more a matter of exchanging one stereotype for another), is perfunctorily described with barely enough passion to inflame a cricket. This is quite frustrating, as this scene is perhaps the most crucial in terms of understanding the characters' future motivations.

One more example. The city of Carbuncle is presented as the apotheosis of vice and corruption, but none of this is shown. The worst thing that Vinge can say about the street scum of Carbuncle is that they gamble, take mild forms of drugs, and visit prostitutes—Berlin of the early thirties described as a modern Des Moines.

The most disturbing structural flaw to me is the fact that the emotional climax of the book, the point where all the interrelationships are sorted out (and it becomes apparent what roles the major characters will take with respect to each other in the future), occurs about a hundred pages before the physical climax, making the latter not only monotonously inevitable but totally lacking in emotional resonance.

All my cavils to the contrary, this vast wandering novel with its clumsy amateurish writing alternating with scenes of effective and vivid power, will be widely read and, no doubt, have an automatic slot in the next awards balloting. The basic story is well told and should have a large audience. I only wish that a firmer hand could have taken hold of the manuscript and made Vinge spend another six months with it.

Beyond the Blue Event Horizon, by Frederick Pohl, Del Rey Books, February 1980 $9.95

The Snow Queen, by Joan Vinge, Dial Quantum Series, April 1980 ●

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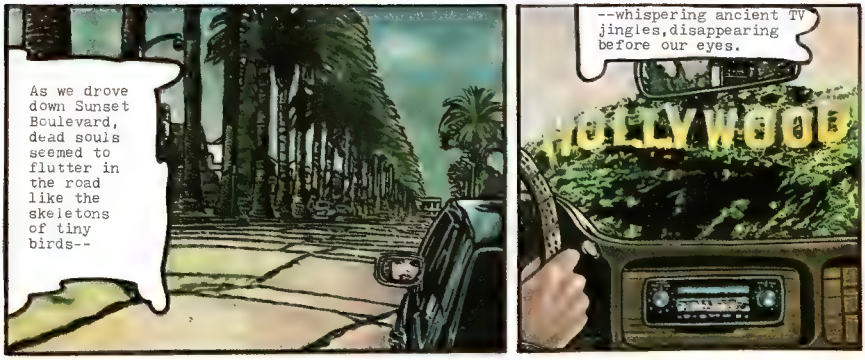

As we drove down Sunset Boulevard, dead souls seemed to flutter in the road like the skeletons of tiny birds--
--whispering ancient TV jingles, disappearing before our eyes.
HOLLYWOOD

COMIX INT'L by Maurice Horn

continued from page 6

Romano il Legionario. The best Italian comic features have been characterized by originality of plot, excellence of draftsmanship, and solidity of design—and it is precisely these qualities that have come to the fore in a number of imaginative and remarkable comic creations that have seen the light of print in Italy during the past fifteen to twenty years

The Exemplary Work of Guido Crepax

Though in many ways he stands apart from his fellow comic strip artists, Guido Crepax can be said, nonetheless, to exemplify the preoccupations and concepts of contemporary Italian cartoonists by his very originality and individuality. In his chosen field he prolongs the experiments of the Italian artists of the Renaissance, and the title

Illustration by Guido Crepax

"Raphael of the Comics" that has been given to him is therefore apt, if somewhat misleading. The features that he has created over the remarkably short span of fifteen years already number more than a dozen. They are all worthy of note, but, by necessity, only a few will be analyzed here. Working almost exclusively in black and white, Crepax is best noted for his loving depiction of beautiful young women often victimized in the course of disturbing sadomasochistic adventures. *La Casa Matta* ("The Mad House," later elaborately reworked as *Bianca*), in which a nubile schoolgirl daydreams and fantasizes her way into a cruel and erotic universe where her schoolmates, teachers, and relatives become her lovers and/or tormentors, is typical Crepax fare. So is *Anita*, an alarming tale of sexual obsession leading to self-immolation.

These predilections that made Crepax the ideal illustrator for two of the most celebrated novels of modern erotic literature, Pauline Reage's *Story of O* and Emmanuelle Arsan's *Emmanuelle*. (It should be noted that

Crepax's treatment is much more faithful to the original works than their watered-down screen adaptations.) In an altogether different vein, Crepax is also the author of *Il Astronave Pirata* ("The Pirate Spaceship"), a tongue-in-cheek tale of science fantasy dealing with pirates in sixteenth century costumes plying their trade aboard twenty-first century rocket ships. In this work the artist broke with his hitherto exclusive attachment to the black-and white medium in his use of color overlays.

Crepax's most famous comic creation, however, remains *Valentina*. It appeared in 1965, in the second issue of the magazine *Linus*, and is the artist's first comic strip.

Giovanni Gandini, *Linus*'s founder and publisher, had approached the artist with an offer to draw, and write, a comic strip for his new magazine. Crepax, an avid collector and reader of comics, eagerly accepted and set to work with alacrity. In the initial stories (titled *Neutron*) the hero was an enigmatic American criminologist and art critic, Philip Rembrandt—in actuality, Neutron, a mutant endowed with super powers. Valentina Rosselli made her appearance in the strip after a couple of months, as a young and alluring photographer. First attracted to Rembrandt, she later shared his adventures as Neutron. Neutron's presence in the strip became less and less frequent as it became more and more Valentina's story. In 1968 she appeared alone for the first time, and the next year the strip was officially renamed *Valentina*.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Valentina is the most significant heroine in European comics. Her vibrant, if neurotic, personality dominates the goings-on in an all-pervasive fashion. The twists, turns, and vagaries of the plot, even the substantiality of the other characters in the story, are not so much a mirror of external reality as a projection of the heroine's obsessions, dreams, fears, and fantasies. Valentina Rosselli is the only character to claim an objective existence: Crepax provides us with clues to Valentina's personal history that, in his typically nonchalant way, he drops all along the narrative, in no particular order. Thus we learn that Valentina was born on Christmas Day 1942—she was twenty-three at the time of her first meeting with Neutron. She grew up in the disturbed years of war-torn and postwar Italy, and the incidents of her childhood would find their corollaries in her adult adventures. From her union with Rembrandt, a son, Mattia, was born in 1970; he is now the only permanent male in the still-unmarried Valentina's life.

So much for *la* Rosselli's private life. Her public life is much more fascinating. A sexy, sophisticated brunette in a Louise Brooks hairdo, with hard small breasts and a hauntingly beautiful face, she goes through her oneiric wanderings in a cataleptic state, half victim, half goddess. A person of catholic tastes and wide culture, Valentina realizes her fantasies in encounters with famous personages of myth and history, as well as with characters out of Joyce's, Proust's, and Melville's novels, Bergman's movies, and, of course, comic strip mythology. If her experiences have a definite sadomasochistic tinge, it is due as much to the ambiguous longings of the lady as to the proclivities of the artist. Valentina is a genuinely modern heroine: her knowledge of, and complicity with, the world of fact only leads to her increased sense of alienation, while her in-

And so I stayed home and watched TV for a year--
--while she made the rounds of studio bungalows, straining for men with needles in their eyes,
BEVERLY HILLS
--their sheets stained yellow from the blood of severed horse heads.

Sometimes she'd appear on the screen clutching the swollen lips of a roast beef sandwich...
Are you happy now?
Of course I'm happy, America.

I discovered I was turning into steel.
I had contracted a rare disease, myositis metallicans automotiva--I was becoming part man, part Chevy Citation...
When I woke up, Quintana had disappeared.
Dearly Beloved, See you in the funny papers. Love, Jean

Have a nice day!
For weeks I haunted the halls of "La Mall" like a ghost.
Thank you much!
surviving on the vapors of Muzak and airborne hallucinogens.
Have a good one!
--surfacing in the daylight to pose, in a frayed leisure suit, as a Modern Shopper...
Hopefully!

sights into the realm of imagination only enhance her feelings of frustration. Boredom, estrangement, guilt, and helplessness are the dark underside—perhaps the penalty—of an outwardly gay, brilliant, and successful existence.

Although there is a pleiad of characters—actual and imagined—gravitating round Valentina, three of them deserve particular study because they serve to illuminate the central protagonist.

The titular hero of the strip at its inception, Philip Rembrandt, has come down a long way from his super-heroic days. Gone now are his powers of levitation, his ability to stop clocks and engines, and the deadly stare capable of paralyzing his foes a hundred yards away. The most telling casualty in Valentina's rise to self-realization, he is now relegated to the role of passive onlooker, not even a sidekick, and a clumsy lover to boot. In a total reversal of roles, Valentina is now the one to whom Rembrandt must occasionally turn for reassurance and comfort.

Of all the villains, male and female, human and animal, who constantly plague the heroine, none is more prominent, or colorful, than Baba Yaga, inspired by a legendary witch in Russian folklore. As depicted by Crepax, Baba Yaga is a desiccated lesbian crone, attired in turn-of-the-century fashions, who tries to lure Valentina away from Rembrandt. She affects various guises, and in particular, replays the role of the bad witches in updated versions of fairy tales such as *Snow White* and *Hansel and Gretel*. She provides the polar opposite to Rembrandt/Neutron's masculinity and may be a reflection of Valentina's own sexual ambivalence.

In contrast to the attractions of the unknown and the unconscious represented by Rembrandt and Baba Yaga, her son Mattia is Valentina's anchor to everyday life. It is his cries for help, for food, for reassurance, that bring Valentina back to earth from her flights into fantasy. Mattia represents the reality principle in Valentina's universe, and the fact that he is a *man*-child is fraught with symbolic irony.

Crepax's detractors have charged that his *Valentina* stories carry no discernible plot. This is somewhat of an exaggeration, although it is true that Crepax took greater and greater liberty with conventional plotting as *Valentina* progressed. In the beginning (when the feature was still known as *Neutron*), the story was straightforward enough: Neutron and his enterprising girl friend found themselves at war against the subterraneans, a race of extremely intelligent, but sightless, superbeings who tried at regular intervals to subjugate the humans of the earth's surface: but the aliens would, in turn, be overwhelmed by Neutron's equally awesome powers. In these stories, the cameo appearances of Mandrake the Magician were both a clue to Crepax's inspiration and a wink in the direction of the knowing reader.

After Valentina assumed the dominant role, the strip soon veered away from primarily science fiction themes toward pure fantasy—half oneiric, half hallucinatory. In her dreams (nightmares? divagations?), Valentina travels through space and time in a universe untrammeled by rules or rationality, where she meets, in turn, monocled Nazis, czarist cossacks, and every imaginable figure of fact and legend (Bluebeard and Archimedes, Lenin and the Amazon Queen). Amidst a splendid and baroque background

reeking of sensuality and decadence. Valentina is usually the victim of the most barbarous treatment. Raped, whipped, quartered, impaled, and branded, she always emerges phoenixlike from her ordeals, unmarked and apparently untouched. (The author once stated that *Valentina* was an allegory of purity in the modern world.) In these latter stories, all semblance of plot does indeed disappear in favor of a stream-of-consciousness narrative, but there still remains a thematic link, however tenuous.

In *Valentina*, the themes are incredibly varied in their inspiration as well as in their expression. They may be derived not only, as we've seen, from myth and folklore but also from movies (notably Bergman and Antonioni), works of literature (*Moby Dick*, *Faust*), pieces of music (Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*; *Pictures at an Exhibition*), and, above all, from the comics.

"Ciao Valentina," one of the most entertaining *Valentina* stories, is a tale of mystery that finds its solution in the course of a "comics party," where the guests come dressed as comic characters (Valentina in a blond wig makes herself up as Daisy Mae). In other stories, Valentina fantasizes herself as "Valentina Arden," rescued from the hawkmen by Flash Gordon; as "Princess Valda," hypnotized into willing submission by Mandrake; and as "Valentina Palmer," locked into fiery embrace with the Phantom (who leaves his famous mark—a skull—on her right buttock).

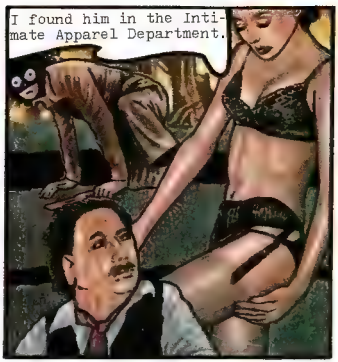
From a close reading of *Valentina*, it soon becomes apparent that we are not in the presence of a simple piece of entertainment (although *Valentina* is great fun) but are confronted with a well-thought-out, intricately woven work of personal expression. The images and associations projected in *Valentina* do not represent simply the musings of a playful mind but are very much a reflection of the artist's own thoughts, beliefs, and concerns.

When I met him for the first time, some ten years ago in Milan, I was struck by how much Crepax, with his close-cropped hair and his regular, slightly tormented features, resembled some of his characters, notably Phil Rembrandt. Half paraphrasing Flaubert, he once admitted: "Rembrandt is me, but Valentina is me also."

Born in 1933 in Milan, of northern Italian and Austrian parentage, Crepax trained as an architect and designed book and record jackets before turning to comics. A devoted family man (his wife Luisa was the model for Valentina, and his children often appear in his drawings), he is little impressed by the fame that has come his way with the success of *Valentina*. He shuns invitations and parties, and his life, as ordered as Valentina's is disheveled, revolves almost completely around his work. Crepax, a leftist, holds that his political views—as distinct from his philosophical attitudes—should have no place in his comics. (He is probably right on this score: the feature in which his political opinions *are* made explicit, *La Calata di MacSimiliano*, is also one of his weakest.)

At the very core of Crepax's vision are his women ("Women attract me very much and frighten me very much," he once confessed). Unlike the big-boobed peasant types so favored by American cartoonists, Crepax's women are small-chested, long-limbed beauties with delicate, patrician faces: their sensuousness all resides in the quivering lips and vulnerable eyes. Crepax draws the kind of

Hello, Mrs. Borax.
Oh--Hello Mrs. Brightener.
Have you seen the new Kenzos?
Yes, I just spent the morning with Mr. Roddy.
Quintana!
I had to tell him he wasn't going to dress me up like a paper bag!
Darling!
Still-- it's A LOOK.
MMM...
She's been stuffed!



women a civilized man would like to know and not just to bed. The artist's fascination with women, made of ambivalence, is paralleled by his adult view of sex as a conflict whose attending ills—jealousy, deception, cruelty, frustration, perversion, violence—are impervious to resolution.

Crepax's view of the world is aesthetic (even tragic) rather than ethic. His is a universe of violence and sex, where innocence is constantly outraged and vice often rewarded. The images he conjures are a model of elegant decadence: baroque in their profusion and their intricacy, they are meant to jar and disorient. The space is abstract (somewhat reminiscent of Giorgio Di Chirico's "metaphysical" paintings) and filled with architectonic devices and geometrical shapes. This is essentially a theatrical universe and the characters are figured mainly as projections.

Crepax's narrative innovations (such as breaking down his pages into minute panels, to suspend the action or depict actions widely separated in space or time) have been widely imitated but never equaled. A controversial as well as a seminal figure whose experiments have revolutionized the comics form, both in structure and in content, Crepax stands alone. More than any comic strip artist, he has provided evidence to the European notion that the comics are a legitimate and inseparable part of Western culture.

Of all Crepax's works, only *The Story of O* is available in English (in a format that doesn't do justice to the artist). For those who wish to take a closer look at the work of this outstanding artist, I would recommend the following hardcover collections of Valentina stories: *Valentina* (which reprints the initial episodes); *Il Diario di Valentina* (in which the heroine's life story is chronicled); *Valentina nella Stufa* (depicting many of the encounters with Baba Yaga); and *Valentina in Giallo* (which contains some of Valentina's most frenetic adventures). The books are distributed in the US by Rizzoli International.

The fame soon acquired by *Neutron/Valentina* helped to establish, in no small measure, the fledgling *Linus* magazine. Most of the comics published in *Linus* were of American origin, but some notable Italian cartoonists, in addition to Crepax, also found a place there. They included Dino Battaglia, who adapted Melville and Lovecraft in comic strip form, and Enso Lunari, the author of the sarcastic *Fra' Salmastro*, based on the thirteenth century tale about a lecherous monk.

Toward the end of the sixties, *Linus* was acquired by the giant Rizzoli publishing house from its founder, Giovanni Gandini, who was himself eased out a few years later. Under the inept leadership of his successor, Oreste Del Buono, *Linus* has been going steadily downhill and is now issued in postage stamp size (dubbed "Piccolinus" by wags). Not eager to be identified with a loser, Crepax had, in the meantime, virtually dropped out of the pages of *Linus* and its sister publication, *Alter*

Linus's meteoric rise in the sixties spawned a number of imitators. Many of the comic magazines born in this period proved short-lived, the most notable exception being *Eureka*, founded in 1967 by Editoriale Corno. Under the able editorship of Luciano Secchi, a modern Renaissance man in his multiple capacity as scriptwriter, journalist,

screenwriter, playwright, and man about town. *Eureka* was to overtake *Linus* in quality, popularity, and circulation. Delicately balancing its contents between foreign comics and local productions, *Eureka* has launched the careers of such luminaries of the Italian comics scene as Pino Zac (already known as a noted animator), Paolo Piffarerio, and the sarcastic Giampaolo Chies, a master of black humor. For these and other cartoonists, Secchi has written innumerable scripts (under the pseudonym "Max Bunker"); he is the author of the phenomenally successful *Alan Ford* (drawn by a succession of artists, including Roberto Raviola and Piffarerio), a hilarious spy parody featuring a hapless bunch of spooks collectively known as the group TNT.

There is probably no country in Europe (or elsewhere) where comics are as widely accepted, discussed, and read as in Italy. Comics gatherings and conventions are legion, the most widely known being the International Conference at Lucca. A yearly rendezvous and marketplace for cartoonists, publishers, and experts from all over the world since 1965 (when it was first held in Bordighera before moving to its current locale the following year), it became a biannual affair in 1976 due to changing economic factors. Another manifestation of the Italian madness for comics (*pazzia di fumetti*) is the blossoming all over Italy of comics clubs bent on reprinting the comics—foreign and domestic—of the past (the most prolific of these clubs, led by Ernesto Traverso of Genoa, has already published over two hundred books and albums, many in color, including reprints in the English language of such classics as *The Phantom*, *Jungle Jim*, *Prince Valiant*, and *Mandrake*).

In view of the high esteem in which comics are held there, it is therefore not surprising that Italian comic art should be flourishing. Of the numerous artists who came to the fore in the last fifteen years the name most often mentioned alongside Crepax's is that of Hugo Pratt. Born on the Adriatic coast of Italy, Pratt had enjoyed a notable career as a cartoonist in South America and England before returning to his native country. At first an obvious imitator of Milton Caniff, Pratt later evolved his own striking style, at once more calligraphic and less documentary than Caniff's. Examples may be seen in a number of excellent strips, the most famous being *Corto Maltese*, about a freewheeling adventurer in the years just prior to the First World War.

Noteworthy Italian comic artists are literally too numerous to mention, but I would mention two more just the same before concluding this piece. The first one is Guido Buzzelli, who, in a number of bizarre strips (*Zilzelub*, *I Labirinti*, etc.), has created a disquieting world peopled by creatures half human, half animal. The other is Franco Bonvicini ("Bonvi"), who has realized the almost impossible feat of making fun out of the horrors of World War II in *Sturmtruppen*, dealing with a battalion of Nazi storm troopers, each one a certified mental case or existential monster. Sick humor at its most sickeningly hilarious!

The panorama presented by Italian comics at the start of the eighties is as impressive as it is varied. It is my strongly felt opinion that these talented artists would find an enthusiastic audience among American comic aficionados—if given a chance.

Well, you've got to plug it in first.
My God, what am I saying? Why do you want to kill me, anyway?
You killed Quintana! She was going to Hollywood and now she can't because you stuffed her!
Um, listen, I think there's been a mistake.
See, here's the label on her ear. She's the standard model 16.
She's already got what every movie star dreams of-- true immortality...
To Be Continued

Suburban Scenes: November by Caza

WHAT...!
WHAT COULD IT BE—? AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT!
ARGH! NEIGHBORS! GOOD GOD!
AH! THEY'LL HEAR FROM ME!
AND HER. SHE SLEEPS THROUGH ANYTHING!
TOC! TOC!
STOP! ENOUGH!
THERE, NOW!
REALLY!
THAT STOPPED THEM!
BUT..
..IT OCCURS TO ME..
WE LIVE ON THE TOP FLOOR!!

WHICH MEANS... THAT NOISE... IT WAS FROM THE ROOF!?!
DONG
DING
AND NOW THEY'RE STARTING UP AGAIN!
DAMN! NOW I HAVE TO GO SEE... I MUST FIND OUT...
THE FIRE STAIRS! THEY MUST LEAD TO THE ROOF!
UP WE GO!
DONG
THESE STAIRS — THEY'RE FILTHY...
IT'S RIGHT UP THERE!
3

HMMMF!
UGH! OPEN, DAMN YOU!!
OH SHIT!
CARA

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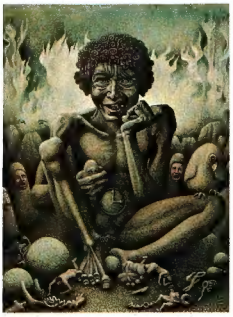

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continued from page 4

"new look" is instituted and will probably remain so until a new editorial regime gains control. At least this letter is cathartic for me, and in the future I'll simply ignore the inevitable interview with Stan Lee and orgasmic hosannas for *Alien II*.

Roman Gorski
Perth Amboy, NJ

Dear Mr. White:

As a reader of *Heavy Metal* since the first issue, I am glad that you were given the job of editing the magazine. I began reading *Amazing* and *Fantastic* in the late sixties, and during the years you were editing those magazines, I came to feel I "knew" you—your personality made both those magazines unique and highly readable. Although I disagreed with some of the things you did, and many of the things you wrote, the effort you put into the job showed itself, and I liked that.

Heavy Metal has suffered from the opposite, I think, because in reading the magazine, issue after issue, I got no feeling of a publication put together by human beings. Part of this is due to the fact that an anthology magazine is mostly a pooling of talent, so that one, or a few personalities probably won't show through. No doubt, part of this is also due to the fact that translated material will tend to be even more remote than material "straight from the source." But, I think a large part of it is due to the fact that the people who have put *HM* together so far seem to have been confused and wishy-washy, as if they really couldn't work together very well, and further, those who gave the magazine its "tone" didn't quite know what they were supposed to do.

My biggest complaint about *HM* so far has been a definite lack of direction. No one working on the magazine seemed willing to put themselves on the line and say, "This is what I think makes a good comic book, and this is how we go about putting one together!"

I don't know how you view your own role at *HM*, but I'm looking forward to seeing you put a distinctive mark on the magazine. I don't think any publication, or organization, loses anything by being unique and distinctive. Current comics try to please everyone by using formulas that subdue the personalities of those who do the creative work. My experience is that readers like material that is original, even if they may disagree with a particular approach or technique.

I would like to see an end to the text fiction and the promotional excerpts that smell so strongly of cynical exploitation. Filling the pages of *Heavy Metal* can't possibly be a major problem, and the use of bits and pieces of larger works, sold elsewhere at a much higher price, is one of the worst practices a publisher can do. It is futile and cynical and manipulative, and people who habitually do this are on my personal "s list." It is something that not only wastes my time, but charges me money for it.

If you do include text material in *HM*, please use material that is entertaining and/or informative. I like to read; I just don't like to be taken advantage of.

As far as the comics content goes, I will support anything an artist or writer comes up with. I am willing to assume that what is worked on, over many hours or days, is an honest effort; the artist put his heart into his work, and it is therefore worth my time to read the stuff at least once. I reserve the right to not like a particular story, of course, but I'm willing to buy *HM* and judge a work after I've read it.

Charles T. Smith
Indialantic, Fla.

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